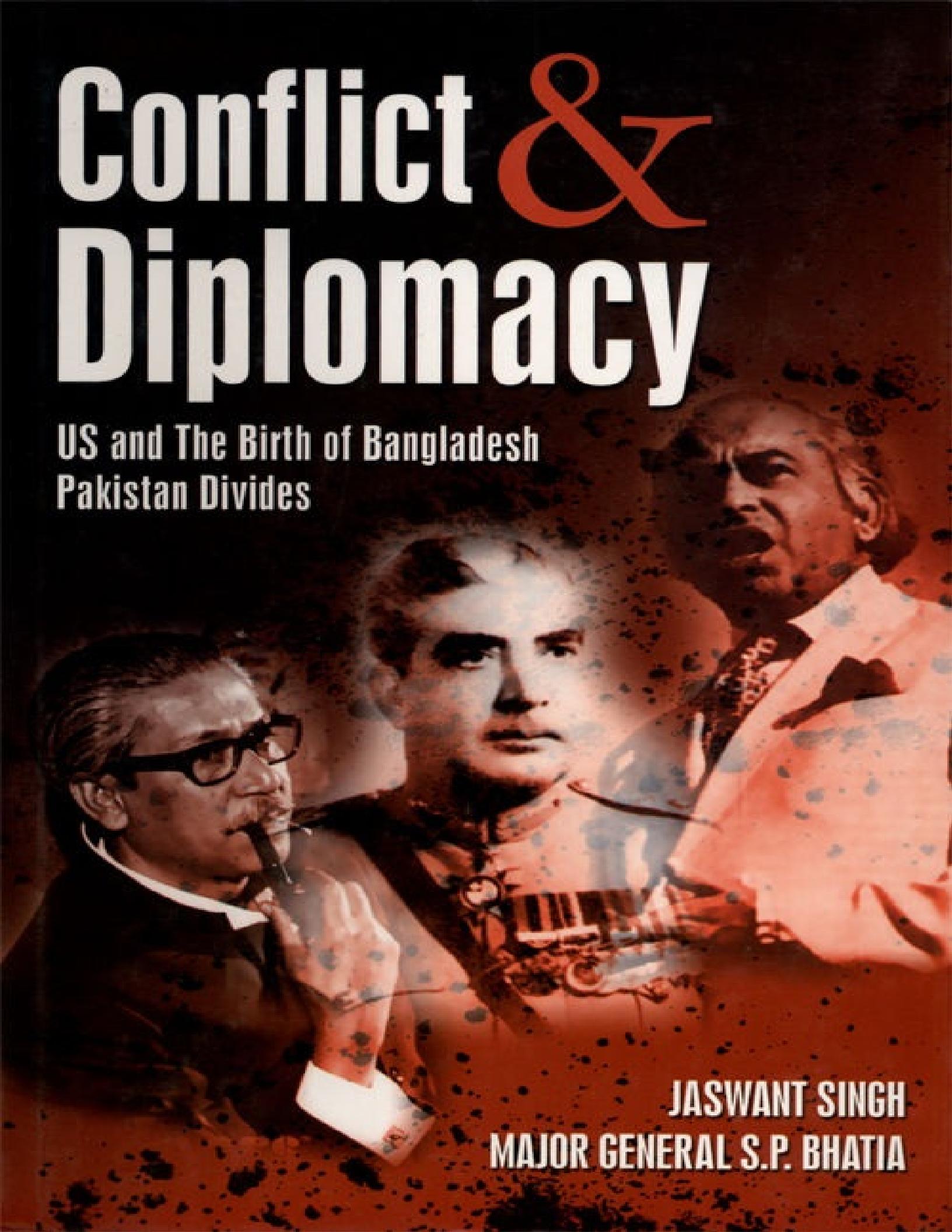


# Conflict & Diplomacy

US and The Birth of Bangladesh  
Pakistan Divides



JASWANT SINGH  
MAJOR GENERAL S.P. BHATIA

*Conflict and Diplomacy: US and the Birth of Bangladesh, Pakistan Divides* delineates East Bengal's long, complicated, and agonising journey from being an integral part of India to East Pakistan, finally to Bangladesh. This reordering of human lives tightly compressed in time inevitably culminated in trauma, generating several new geo-political stress lines of enormous power in the subcontinent. The authors, JASWANT SINGH and MAJ. GEN. S.P. BHATIA, lead the readers along this twisted and torturous path of the birth of Bangladesh under Indian midwifery, intrigued by West Pakistani and the US diplomacy. The declassified US documents provide revealingly informative aspects of the US diplomacy during this challenging period. The excerpts of diplomatic exchanges between Delhi – Washington – Dhaka, Dhaka – Washington, Islamabad – Washington, and the off-guard internal conversations of the political and diplomatic string pullers are sure to fascinate and interest the readers.

CONFLICT AND DIPLOMACY  
US and the Birth of Bangladesh

*Pakistan Divides*

# CONFLICT AND DIPLOMACY

## US and the Birth of Bangladesh

*Pakistan Divides*

JASWANT SINGH

MAJ. GEN. (RETD.) S.P. BHATIA

*Foreword by*  
Field Marshal Sam Manekshaw MC

Rupa Co

'In war time no soldier is free to say what he thinks; after a war no one cares what a soldier thinks.'

GENERAL SIR IAN HAMILTON,  
*Dispatches from the Dardanelles*

# **Contents**

*List of Characters*

*Foreword*

*Introduction*

1. Events Between March-November 1971

2. Confronting the Challenge: Contingency Planning on South Asia—July 1971

3. The War Starts

4. 14 December (continued) Ceasefire Proposal—Dhaka to State (Afternoon)

5. Aftermath

6. Bangladesh Now

*Appendix—I*

*Appendix—II*

*Appendix—III*

*Index*

## List of Characters

**Bhutto, Zulfiqar Ali**, Chairman of the Pakistan People's Party; Minister of Foreign Affairs and Deputy Prime Minister, 7-19 December 1971; thereafter President, Minister of Foreign Affairs, and Minister of Defense of Pakistan **Blood, Archer K.**, Consul General in Dacca until June 1971

**Bowles, Chester**, Ambassador to India until April 1969

**Brezhnev, Leonid Ilyich**, General Secretary of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union **Bush, George H. W.**, Republican Congressman from Texas until January 1971; Permanent Representative to the United Nations, February 1971-January 1973

**Conally, John B.**, Jr., Secretary of Treasury, February 1971-May 1972

**De Palma, Samuel**, Assistant Secretary of State for International Organisation Affairs **Douglas Home, Sir Alec**, British Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs from June 1970

**Edward**, British Prime Minister from June 1970

**Farland, Joseph S.**, Ambassador to Pakistan, September 1969-April 1972

**Gandhi, Indira**, Prime Minister of India from 1966-1970; thereafter from 1980-1984

**Giri, Varahagiri Venkata**, Vice President of India until 3 May 1969; Acting President, 3 May-29 July 1969; President from 20 August 1969.

**Haig, General Alexander M., Jr.**, Senior Military Adviser to the Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs, January 1969-June 1970; Deputy Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs, June 1970-January 1973

**Haksar, Parmeshwar Narain**, Secretary to Prime Minister Indira Gandhi

**Haq, Major General Inam-ul**, Director General, Defense Procurement,

Pakistan Ministry of Defense Helms, Richard M., Director of Central Intelligence until February 1973

**Huang Hua**, Permanent Representative of the People's Republic of China to the United Nations **Irwin, John N., II**, Under Secretary of State, September 1970 -July 1972; thereafter, Deputy Secretary of State **Jha, Lakshmi Kant**, Governor of the Reserve Bank of India until May 1970; thereafter, Indian Ambassador to the United States **Johnson, U. Alexis**, Secretary of State for Political Affairs from February 1969 Keating, Kenneth B., Ambassador to India, May 1969—July 1972

**Kellogg, Francis L.**, Special Assistant to the Secretary of State for Refugee and Migration Affairs from January 1971; Chairman of the Interagency Committee on Pakistani Refugee Relief **Khan, Lieutenant General Tikka**, Martial Law Administrator and Governor of East Pakistan, February-September 1971; Commander-in-Chief of the Pakistan Army from March 1972

**Kissinger, Henry A.**, Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs 1969

**Kosygin, Aleksei N.**, Chairman of the Council of Ministers of the Soviet Union  
**MacDonald, Donald G.**, Assistant Administrator for Near East and South Asia, Agency for International Development **Manekshaw, General Sam Hormusji Framji Jamshedji**, Chief of Staff of the Indian Army **Moorer, Admiral Thomas H., USN**, Chief of Naval Operations until July 1970; thereafter Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff **Nixon, Richard M.**, President of the United States

**Noyes, James H.**, Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Security Affairs **Packard, David**, Deputy Secretary of Defense from January 1969

**Rahman, Sheikh Mujibur (Mujib)**, President of the Awami League; Prime Minister and Minister of Defense of Bangladesh from January 1972

**Ram, Jagjivan**, Indian Minister of Defense from June 1970

**Rasgotra, Maharajakrishna**, Minister for Political Affairs of the Indian Embassy in the United States **Raza, Major General Nawabzada Agha Mohammad**, Pakistani Ambassador to the United States, November 1971-April 1972

**Rogers, William P.**, Secretary of State, January 1969-September 1973

**Scali, John**, Special Consultant to the President, January 1971-January 1973

**Selden, Armistead, I., Jr.**, Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for

International Security Affairs **Shultz, George P.**, Secretary of Labor, January 1969-June 1970; first Director of the Office of Management and Budget, June 1970-May 1972

**Singh, Swaran**, Indian Minister of Defense until June 1970; thereafter, Minister of External Affairs **Sisco, Joseph J.**, Assistant Secretary of State for International Organization Affairs until February 1969; thereafter, Assistant Secretary of State for Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs; Chairman of the NSC Interdepartmental Group for the Near East and South Asia  
**Spivack, Herbert D.**, Consul General in Dacca, June 1971-September 1972

**Stans, Maurice**, Secretary of Commerce, January 1969-January 1972

**Thant, U**, Secretary-General of the United Nations until December 1971

**Van Hollen, Christopher**, Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs, May 1969-September 1972; thereafter, Ambassador to Sri Lanka **Vorontsov, Yuli M.**, Minister of the Soviet Embassy in the United States

**Williams, Maurice J.**, Deputy Administrator, Agency for International Development; Chairman of Interdepartmental Working Group on East Pakistan Disaster Relief **Westmoreland, General**, Commander of 187th Airborne Regimental Combat Team in Korean War **Yahya Khan**, General Agha Mohammad, Chief Martial Law Administrator, President, Minister of Defense, and Minister of Foreign Affairs of Pakistan, March 1969-December 1971

**Ziegler, Ronald L.**, Press Secretary to the President, January 1969-January 1973

**Zumwalt, Admiral Elmo R.**, Chief of Naval Operations

**Zhou-enlai**, Premier of People Republic of China from 1 October 1949-8 January 1976

**Field Marshal Sam Manekshaw, MC**



## **Foreword**

I commend the authors for their excellent work and immense effort in compiling this book. 1300 pages of printed material, comprising documents that were declassified last year and made public by the US Government, have been very effectively distilled by them to a concise readable length. Some extremely interesting and revealingly instructive aspects of US diplomacy during this challenging period have been brought to light by the authors.

The book appropriately starts with an analysis of the advent of Islam in Bengal. The authors then take us through the twisted tortured path covering the travails, tribulations and traumas through which Bengal has passed. The chapter that describes Bengal's agonizing journey from being India', to 'East Pakistan' and finally to 'Bangladesh' is very aptly titled indeed. The short chapter on the military conflict is appropriate and adequately covers all the essential details of the conflict and the many follies that had preceded those decisive days of 1971.

My directive to the army was clear and unambiguous. The objectives that were given and the tasks set were achieved in full measure. The Indian Army performed their assigned tasks with clinical precision, distinction and elan. It is to the lasting credit of the Indian Army that with victory at their feet, they treated more than 90,000 PsOW of their adversary with the dignity due to a soldier.

The chapters in which excerpts of the diplomatic exchange between Delhi-Washington-Dhaka, Dhaka-Washington, Islamabad-Washington, and the internal conversation are given, make for fascinating reading.

India achieved that signal victory 35 long years back. It was indeed a remarkable campaign where everything unfolded with such precision and finesse that not even a single event appeared out of step. In the very long journey that India has travelled since independence, this book will constitute a useful account

of a significant milestone.

I commend it strongly to readers, both lay and professionals alike.

Deshaw  
16 Dec

(SHFJ Manekshaw)  
**Field Marshal**

# **Introduction**

## **The Backdrop**

The seeds of Bengali/Bangladeshi nationalism having lain dormant for some decades began germinating the moment an appropriate environ got created for that sentiment. Then some of the older questions, their answers, and old, established verities began asserting: what is nationhood? Which is more potent, the cultural and linguistic identity of a people or the glue of common faith? Finally, can that glue alone provide a solid foundation for nationhood? Above all this, the shadow of a partition loomed, a trenchant comment upon the division of India? Was 'Partition' the answer, a division of the land and its people, and on grounds of faith alone? That 'Muslims are a separate nation'?

As for Bangladesh its independent existence is as much a consequence of the reality of Bengali culture as the identifying vehicle of its expression that musical language of all Bengal with rounded vowels and fattened 's' and 't' sounds. An earlier division of Bengal by the imperial British power, in 1904, under the viceroyalty of Lord Curzon had resulted in an upsurge of protests. Yet, in 1947, a partition of that very same Bengal into an East Pakistan and a West Bengal was actually sought after, fuelled by religious passions. Later, when independent India and Pakistan were barely twenty-five years old, yet again, that Bengali sentiment of East Pakistan asserted itself against the accumulated insensitivities of a domineering western wing of their country. On this occasion, the binding glue of faith was challenged by the particularity of culture and language. This, was of course, largely a consequence of political mismanagement by the Punjabi dominated, martial law government of General Yahya Khan, and a cynical exploitation of the difficulties of his country by the

late Z.A. Bhutto; but was there, in the emergence of an independent Bangladesh a lesson which had not been recognised from the history of this subcontinent? And, of course, it has a lesson for India's future, too. Reflect for a moment on the significance of the post-partition names adopted: for example, both the Indian and Pakistani parts of Punjab retain Punjab, this identity nomenclature being equally clearly demonstrated in the case of a divided Bengal. As Bangladesh, East Bengal assumes, in only a slightly altered form, the name of that original which asserts, even if impliedly a continuity of the larger cultural oneness.

That is why East Bengal's complicated and tortured journey from being first, an integral part of India, then becoming Pakistan, as East Pakistan; then separating again and becoming Bangladesh, repeats many lessons of our history; of the pitfalls of having taken a rather simplistic recourse to this partitioning of India: a decision born no doubt of fatigue, exasperation, impatience, expediency, or whatever. It was a cruel act, this dividing of an ancient unity, demonstrating, on our land, this tendency of the Imperial British to conceive of nations based on religion and only on that one ground alone. This was and remains a fundamentally unsound, often a destructive basis.

What was always apprehended before partition, became a reality after, generating strong resistance, this domination of new born Pakistan by West Punjab. Very shortly after independence this began to be experienced in both wings of Pakistan, East and West. Unquestionably, Islam, the political muezzin's call is a powerful and an arresting summon but even that does not submerge ethnic or other realities of a people's identity. And these began to be manifest in East Pakistan within just a year of Pakistan's Independence.

Bangladesh, of course, came later, but by any historical measure it was startlingly soon after partition. This manner of so radically reordering human lives—from India to Pakistan—East and West Pakistan—then to Bangladesh, and all so tightly compressed in time has certainly not happened in our lands, ever earlier. This inevitably, had to result in great trauma, also generate several new geopolitical stress lines of incalculable destructive potential and in the entire subcontinents. These have left in their wake a detritus of untold human suffering.

## **The Conflict and the Attendant Diplomacy**

That is how conflict came, of course accompanied by diplomacy. After all, a conflict had lain in the very circumstances, inherent in the very situation as it

unfolded. And as it unfolded tragically the super-power of those years began fishing eagerly; the US and the USSR. Pakistan was, of course, both the cause and a party to the conflict but what about China? Then, in this period Brezhnev had propounded an 'Asian Mutual Security' concept, aimed clearly at India. At first, India's response was cautious. But of greater importance to the Soviet Union was late Mrs Gandhi's government's response to Moscow's proposal, for a treaty between these two states. It could well result in a Soviet termination, or at least a reduction of their military aid to Pakistan. Moscow also considered such a treaty an important step in the direction of an Indian endorsement of Brezhnev's June 1969 'Asian mutual security' proposal, which was an integral part of the Soviet Union's policy of a containment of China. A broad agreement on the proposed Indo-Soviet treaty was reached during negotiations conducted by the erstwhile Indian ambassador to Moscow, the debonair and eloquent D.P. Dhar, in mid 1969. It is probable that the treaty would have got signed in the first half of 1970 itself had the internal political situation in India so permitted. For its part Moscow informed New Delhi in April 1970, that Soviet military aid to Pakistan was being 'suspended', though in fact some arms shipments, of the pipeline variety, to Pakistan continued through 1970 and well into 1971.

Of the three external powers US, USSR and Peoples' Republic of China (PRC), was probably placed in the most difficult position by the events of 25 March 1971 in East Pakistan. Beijing had calculated then that it had nothing to gain, and much to lose from these developments, no matter what their outcome. PRC was clearly unenthusiastic about any military crackdown in East Pakistan, which after all, in one fashion, was directed against pro-Chinese political factions there, as well as against the Awami League. On balance, however, Beijing was far more concerned with avoiding any actions that would weaken or alienate its South Asian 'ally', Pakistan. Therefore, China whilst taking a public position seemingly supportive of the Pakistani government, was simultaneously also informing the Pakistani embassy in China and the foreign ministry in Islamabad, privately, that it would not intervene in hostilities, either internal or international, on the subcontinent. Thus, by mid April 1971, the core group of that ill-fated Yahya Khan government—but not the Pakistani public—had been told that they could not expect Chinese military support in the event of a conflict with India. The government of Pakistan, therefore, decided to knock on Beijing's gates once again with a request for assistance, in other words, to reverse their April policy position. A deputation comprising late Z.A. Bhutto, Air Marshal Rahim Khan, and Gen. Gul Hasan went to Beijing on 7 November. In a meeting

with Zhou Enlai, Air Marshal Rahim Khan asked for thirty fighter planes, as well as sundry other military supplies on an emergency basis, while Bhutto sounded out the PRC premier on whether China would consider coming to the assistance of Pakistan in the event of war with India. Zhou replied that war was unlikely, but that if it occurred Chinese military forces would not intervene directly in support of Pakistan, although China would support Pakistan politically and provide material assistance.<sup>1</sup>

In any event, India had then assessed that China had not the capacity to intervene effectively had it even wanted to. The Chinese military forces in Tibet had not been reinforced or resupplied, was the assessment. Even more important in New Delhi's calculations was the September 1971 'coup' attempt by Mao's designated successor, Lin Biao, supported by some elements in the Chinese air force and army.<sup>2</sup>

Even though China during the 1971 war, behaved exactly as they had informed Pakistan, and India had assessed there exist some doubts about reactions to this assessment. India was cautious, if simply could not repeat the intelligence errors of 1962, which is why Indian troop deployments all through this short war did not result in any significant milking of the divisions on either the Eastern frontier or in Ladakh.

On the other hand 'US policy in South Asia [was much] less consistent, and hence less predictable, than either Soviet or Chinese policy.' Obviously the US establishment was divided on this question, not over the objectives of US policy but about the public position [to be] taken by the government. More specifically, 'the dispute focused on the question of whether the United States should publicly criticise the Yahya government for its repressive actions in East Pakistan'.<sup>3</sup> The logic behind this hesitant approach was outlined in a Kissinger report to the Washington Special Action Group, (WSAG), on South Asia, in early September 1971. What were the options listed then 'First, it could have condemned the government in Pakistan and cut off all assistance'. The purpose of such a stance would have been to rely on the political 'shock effect' to change Pakistani policy. A secondary purpose would also have been to step away from a government that, in much of the world's eyes, was responsible for a great deal of human suffering.

Or, second, it could have expressed concern and restricted the actual flow of assistance but stopped short of an act of open condemnation. The purpose of such a stance would have been to maintain effective communication with Islamabad while making clear that a 'normal US-Pakistani assistance relationship could not be resumed as long as the present disruption in Pakistan continued.'<sup>4</sup>

Leo Rose explains that the US government had chosen the second course 'not with any illusion about being able to shift sharply the course of events, but because it "would offer the best chance of conserving our limited ability to influence" Pakistani policies, as well as offering the best chance of the United States taking effective action to help' meet the human needs of the people of East Pakistan.<sup>5</sup> For the US government India's intentions towards West Pakistan were critical. In Kissinger's words again: 'There was no question of 'saving' East Pakistan. Both Nixon and I had recognized for months that its independence was inevitable; war was not necessary to accomplish it. We strove to preserve West Pakistan as an independent state, since we judged India's real aim was to encompass its disintegration'.<sup>6</sup>

## **USS Enterprise**

'Gun boat diplomacy', it was called, that dispatch of USS Enterprise— Task Force 74, or 'Oh! Calcutta!'<sup>7</sup> as some given to jocularity had then termed it.

'On 10 December the Enterprise and four escorts were ordered to sail from their station in the Gulf of Tonkin toward Singapore. On 12 December they met another naval detachment off the Singapore coast and on 14 December, after two days' unexplained delay, sailed down the Strait of Malacca during the daylight hours into the northern most section of the Bay of Bengal. Task Force 74 then turned south and was operating in the Indian Ocean to the Southeast of Sri Lanka when Dhaka surrendered on 16 December and the war ended the next day with the ceasefire on the western front'.<sup>8</sup>

What after all was USS Enterprise doing? Kissinger and Nixon have generally tended to explain and justify the Enterprise episode in broader geopolitical terms, primarily the supposed impact of this symbolic gesture of support for a Pakistani 'ally' on China, just at the time when the United States was beginning the process of normalising relations with the People's Republic. Some others in the 'State Department placed greater importance on the impact of American support of a Muslim state on the international Islamic community. Both were factors that were considered, but [by] themselves would not have been decisive'.<sup>9</sup>

There were no Soviet naval forces in the region then and none arrived until 18 December 1971, but by then the war was over. In any event it was naive to expect the USSR combating the US in the Bay of Bengal on the question of East

Pakistan. Besides, the orders to the US Task Force were vague and intended not towards any specific task, it all seemed rather advisory: to conduct 'naval, air and surface operations to support US interests in the Indian Ocean area'.<sup>10</sup> Predictably the Indian response was bitter, it continues to exude bile, still.

## The Book

It is this period that we are revisiting. The book encapsulates briefly the strategic dimension of the challenge; how India, Pakistan, USSR, PRC and USA assessed the challenge respectively and how they responded. This account (assessment) is based on the original papers of the State Department now made public, for the first time, following the thirty year rule.<sup>11</sup> In the following chapters we follow the conduct of US diplomacy in this 'Bangladesh conflict'.

A word about the authors. By 1971 one of us (JS) was not in uniform and was already active in this rather disorderly world of politics. But he had obviously watched all these developments with great interest, besides there was fighting on the Western border, too. The authors held then, as they still do that this development—the birth of Bangladesh with India's midwifery—ought not to be treated as a totally positive development from the perspective of India's national interests. Also that gratitude and 'good turn' have several reactions, but everlasting gratitude from the beneficiary is not one of them.

Many have attempted to write about the military dimension of the operations as were conducted then, hardly any have dilated on the diplomatic challenges. This recent de-classification of documents by the US State Department opened, for us, the scope of a study of the diplomatic responses of the US to this crisis in 1971. Though, this is limited to examining the political crisis that sprouted in Pakistan in March 1971, the focus of the documents is on the management of the crisis by President Nixon and the then Secretary of State Kissinger. The purpose of the current work is to study diplomacy during that challenge to India, indeed the subcontinent and in that the various parleys that took place between the US, The USSR and China to 'manage' this crisis. These documents are a rich minefield of unequalled importance for they are the original record, admittedly of only one of the players but then all the others have remained silent. The book is attempted as a narrative account of how US decision-makers at the highest level deliberated (or perhaps still do) upon issues of global importance and consequence. In comparison, the Indian process comes across as unrivalled in dreary pedantry; a forced, insincere formality of

behaviour and false opinions. The US is at times, alarmingly casual, India in comparison mostly, excessively formal. Equally noteworthy is poor intelligence: it is as bad in the US as in India, therefore, our assessment, too, is equally bad, as bad in the US as in India. Though, we are unable to decide whether there is any real satisfaction to be derived from this 'democractisation of deficiencies'.

The sharpest contrast is in the meticulous maintenance of all records, no matter how trivial at the time of being recorded, or even in retrospect. India, on the other hand, with our officialdom in the lead actually destroys records, sometimes deliberately, otherwise mostly through casual indifference; this is akin to destroying our country's irreplaceable historical records; our own history.

Though these US documents are now open to all and are not copyright protected, we do extend our grateful acknowledgement to the US State Department for extending this courtesy of being able to quote from them for the purpose of this study.

There is a brief explanation needed about the layout and the methodology of the book. To distil into approximately 200 pages, what in the original is almost 1300 pages of US documents was a Herculean task. Of course, it is a subjective selection, what else could it be? To enable the reader to readily discern, what has been printed in italics is a verbatim quote from the documents, some of it albeit with the spellings that were then in vogue, no attempt has been made to align them with current usage. We have at the end of such quotes provided the reference of the document(s) that they were distilled from. This would permit those want to carry a deeper analysis to go to the source with ease. What are not italicised are comments that were not sourced by the authors.

We are grateful to our publishers, Rupa &C Co. and their highly competent and professional team who worked with us. It is their help that has enabled the book to make it to the stands. For designing the cover of the book and proof-reading and copy-editing, a special vote of thanks to team members Sanjana Roy Choudhury and Paulami Seal for their specialisation and their skills.

Ashwini Channan ably strung together his team consisting of Natarajan Swaminathan and Anjan Bhowmick (secretarial and stenographic assistance) and Vikas Thotada along with Banke Sharma (technical support). Without them this book would not be where it is today.

Everything that we write here is obviously our own, hence entirely our responsibility; after all, these are our views. Not everything that we write will be accepted, that is inevitable. That is also why we alone are responsible accountable for the views, opinions, analyses expressed here. For all mistakes,

errors of judgment, expression or otherwise, we are solely responsible.

**Jaswant Singh**  
**Major General S.P. Bhatia**

---

<sup>1</sup>Richard Sisson and Leo E. Rose, War and Secession: Pakistan, India, and the Creation of Bangladesh (New Delhi: Vistaar Publications, 1990) p. 251.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 252.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 252.

<sup>4</sup>Kissinger, statement to the Washington Special Action Group dated 2 September 1971 (FOI document; the date of the meeting is not indicated in the records made available).

<sup>5</sup>Richard Sisson and Leo E. Rose, op.cit., p. 260.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid., p. 262.

<sup>7</sup>*Oh! Calcutta!* was a long-running avant-garde theatrical revue, created by British drama critic Kenneth Tynan. The show, consisting of various sketches on sex-related topics, debuted in Off-Broadway in 1969. It proved, once again, that sex sells, running in London for over 2,400 performances, and in New York for over 1,600. The show sparked considerable controversy at the time, because it featured extended scenes of total nudity, both male and female.

<sup>8</sup>Richard Sisson and Leo E. Rose, op.cit., p. 263.

<sup>9</sup>Ibid.

<sup>10</sup>J.N. Dixit, Assignment Colombo (Delhi: Konark Publishers Ltd, 1997), p. 327.

<sup>11</sup>The thirty year rule is a rule pertaining to archives which states that all documents or files which have been closed for more than thirty years are accessible to the public. This time limit is determined by Article 1 of the regulation (CE, Euratom) n° 1700/2003 modifying the regulation (CEE, EURATOM) no. 354/83 of the Council of 1 February 1983 and as such governs the opening to the public of the Historical Archives of the Commission of the European Communities.

## **Chapter One**

## **Events Between March-November 1971**

### **US Influence, Role and Endeavour**

Events in East Pakistan had begun gathering pace from early in 1971. We have in the preceding chapter examined briefly the military campaign but from the outbreak of hostilities in December 1971 between India and Pakistan. The leaders, however, of both India and Pakistan had kept important world capitals apprised of developments during 1971. India had a unitary link with the USSR and Pakistan relied upon China and the US. But it is the regular frequency with which leaders of both India and Pakistan wrote letters to the US president (and received replies) and the respective embassies consulted, exchanged information and how this was received and recorded by the US State Department is invaluable now for historical analysis.

### **The Military Dictatorship Attacks on its Own Citizens**

By 25 March 1971 sufficient military had been concentrated in East Pakistan to enable Gen. Yahya Khan the choice of unleashing them against Pakistan's own citizens in the East. As per earlier estimates, a military force of approximately 32,000 armed personnel (20,000 West Pakistani regulars plus twelve thousand of the East Bengal Regiment) was already available to the army in the East. This was reinforced by another two divisions or so sent expressly from West Pakistan, all this build up having taken place in the greatest possible secrecy, with one division arriving by ship and another by air through commandeering all available military and civilian aircraft.

With heavy concentrations of force in the two major cities of Dhaka and

Chittagong, the Pakistani regular army suddenly let loose a reign of terror upon its own citizens, indiscriminate, cruel and acting as if they were in enemy territory. The night of 25/26 March became the 'night of the long knives'<sup>1</sup> when this reign of terror was let loose. The army had been forewarned and had been preparing for this eventuality in great detail. It is believed that the army went from house to house, in tanks and armoured cars, with a liberal supply of fuel in cans, tackling predetermined targets, being armed with lists of names and addresses of Awami League elected members, their sympathisers and of their family members; it would surround such houses, give orders for the inmates to come out and shoot them when they did; in cases where no one volunteered to emerge, houses were set on fire and then the escapees shot.

In the next few days this killing spread to smaller towns in addition to Dhaka and Chittagong. In Dhaka the soldiers ransacked the Dhaka University and killed a number of students and professors considered to be the core of the intellectual inspiration behind the Awami League.

Newspaper reporters had all been rounded up in a hotel and asked to leave East Pakistan the very next day. Strict censorship was immediately imposed so that the news of these massacres did not go out to the world.

The then US consul general, Archer Kent Blood, in Dhaka had sent telegrams spread over a number of days recounting these atrocities in detail, with mounting horror and deep concern. He had mentioned that no staff had been turning up at the consulate and that the US children had stopped attending schools which had obviously been closed, also that the movements of American families had been severely confined. Blood had also reported that on the very first night of the clamp-down the number of people killed was between 4,000 to 6,000. T.N. Kaul, the Indian foreign secretary, had later told Ambassador Kenneth Keating that the casualties ran into six figures.

After 'dealing' with the Awami League leadership and the movement's intellectual heart, the army is reported thereafter to have moved into the city's interiors to intimidate the Hindu population in the city. This action resulted in another outflow of refugees which started as a small trickle and thereafter continued to multiply on an ever increasing scale. In Chittagong, also the principal port of East Pakistan, considerable damage and fatalities occurred.

According to Stephen Cohen, when the Bengali agitation for autonomy had grown beyond acceptable limits, Yahya Khan and the army brass of West Pakistan thought that 'a whiff of gun-powder would overawe the meek Bengalis'.<sup>2</sup>

On 6 April the famous 'Dissent Telegram' from Archer Kent Blood was received by the State Department in Washington. It set alarm bells ringing:

*"Dhaka, 6th April, 1971, Subj: Dissent From U.S. Policy Toward East Pakistan.*

- Aware of the task force proposals on "openness" in the Foreign Service, and with the conviction that U.S. policy related to recent developments in East Pakistan serves neither our moral interests broadly defined nor our national interests narrowly defined, numerous officers of Am Con Gen Dhaka, USAID Dhaka and USIS Dhaka consider it their duty to register strong dissent with fundamental aspects of this policy. Our government has failed to denounce the suppression of democracy. Our government has failed to denounce atrocities. Our government has failed to take forceful measures to protect its citizens while at the same time bending over backwards to placate the West Pak dominated government and to lessen likely and deservedly negative international public relations impact against them. Our government has evidenced what many will consider moral bankruptcy, ironically at a time when the USSR sent President Yahya a message defending democracy, condemning arrest of leader of democratically elected majority party (incidentally pro-West) and calling for end to repressive measures and bloodshed. In our most recent policy paper for Pakistan, our interests in Pakistan were defined as primarily humanitarian, rather than strategic. But we have chosen not to intervene, even morally, on the grounds that the Awami conflict, in which unfortunately the overworked term genocide is applicable, is purely internal matter of a sovereign state. Private Americans have expressed disgust. We, as professional public servants express our dissent with current policy and fervently hope that our true and lasting interests here can be defined and our policies redirected in order to salvage our nation's position as a moral leader of the free world.
- Our specific areas of dissent, as well as our policy proposals, will follow by septel.
- Signed

*Brian Bell*

*Robert L. Bourquein, W. Scott Butcher, Eric Griffel Zachary, M. Hahn Jake Harshbarger, Robert A. Jackson, Lawrence Koegel, Joseph A. Malpeli Willard, D. McCleary, Desaix Myers, John L. Nesvig, William Grant, Parr*

*Robert, Carce Richard, L. Simpson, Robert C. Simpson, Richard E. Suttor, Wayne A. Swedengurg, Richard L. Wilson.*

- *I support the right of the above named officers to voice their dissent. Because they attach urgency to their expression of dissent and because we are without any means of communication other than telegraphic, I authorize the use of a telegram for this purpose.*
- *I believe the views of these officers, who are among the finest U.S. officials in East Pakistan, are echoed by the vast majority of the American community, both official and unofficial.*
- *I also subscribe to these views but I do not think it appropriate for me to sign their statement as long as I am principal officer at this post.*
- *My support of their stand takes on another dimension. As I hope to develop in further reporting, I believe the most likely eventual outcome of the struggle underway in East Pakistan is a Bengali victory and the consequent establishment of an independent Bangladesh (emphasis added). At the moment we possess the good will of the Awami League. We would be foolish to forfeit this asset by pursuing a rigid policy of one-sided support to the likely loser." Blood*

*Ref: Document 19, Foreign Relations, 1969-1976, Volume XI, South Asia Crisis, 1971.*

This is an historic telegram, it would be superfluous to add any comment to it.

### **Yahya writes to Nixon**

On the same day Gen. Yahya Khan, president of Pakistan had written thus to the US president.

#### *April 6, Yahya Khan's Letter/Telegram to President Nixon*

(He addressed letters with similar texts to numerous heads of government. This was evidently as soon as he had regained balance after the tense actions in East Pakistan, described by many as 'disastrous'.)

The main point made in this letter was to seek US help against possible Indian intervention. It spoke of the danger he expected from the 'Indian threat'.

*Ambassador Farland had forwarded Yahya Khan's letter with the comments*

*that it was probably a mixture of genuine concern and an effort to divert internal and external attention from Pak army actions in East Pakistan. The ambassador was of the opinion that while Pakistan's worry about Indian intentions seemed reasonable, at the same time, "India serves, as always, a ready and convenient whipping boy".*

*Ref: Document 21, Foreign Relations, 1969-1976, Volume XI, South Asia Crisis, 1971.*

### **White House Reaction to Blood's Report 'They bitched about our policy'**

The telegram received from Dhaka stunned and upset the US administration which would wear it as a millstone around its neck. Rogers and Kissinger<sup>3</sup> discussed the subject informally:

*"(Rogers ) R: I wanted to talk about that goddam message from our people in Dacca. Did you see it?*

*Kissinger: No.*

*R: It's miserable. They bitched about our policy and have given it lots of distribution so it will probably leak. It's inexcusable.*

*K: And it will probably get to Ted Kennedy.*

*R: I am sure it will.*

*K: Somebody gives him cables. I have had him call me about them.*

*R: It's a terrible telegram. Couldn't be worse—says we failed to defend American lives and are morally bankrupt.*

*K: Blood did that?*

*R: Quite a few of them signed it. You know we are doing everything we can about it. Trying to get the telegrams back as many as we can. We are going to get a message back to them.*

*K: I am going in these [next] two days to keep it from the President until he has given his speech.*

*R: If you can keep it from him I will appreciate it. In the first place, I think we have made a good choice.*

*K: The Chinese haven't said anything.*

*R: They talk about condemning atrocities. There are pictures of the East Pakistanis murdering people.*

*K: Yes. There was one of an East Pakistani holding a head. Do you remember when they said there were 1000 bodies and they had the graves and then we couldn't find 20?*

*R: To me it is outrageous they would send this.*

*K: Unless it hits the wires I will hold it. I will not forward it.*

In his memoirs Kissinger writes that the dissent cable from Dacca pointed up a dilemma for the administration. 'The United States<sup>4</sup> could not condone a brutal military repression', and there was 'no doubt about the strong-arm tactics of the Pakistani military'. He explains the administration's decision not to react publicly to the military repression in East Pakistan as necessary to protect 'our sole channel to China'. As a result of the cable, President Nixon ordered Consul General Archer Blood transferred from Dacca. Kissinger conceded that "there was some merit to the charge of moral insensitivity.'

(Ref: Document 20, *Foreign Relations, 1969-1976, Volume XI, South Asia Crisis, 1971.*)

### **Prime Minister Designate?**

**Yahya Khan said Mujibur Rehman would be Prime Minister of Pakistan**

On 14 January 71, Yahya Khan had said at a press conference in Dhaka that Sheikh Mujibur Rehman '*would be Pakistan's prime minister*'.

And now the very same person was under arrest with the likelihood of being charged as a traitor, with the possibility of death penalty; and his political party, the Awami League which had overwhelmingly won a 'free and fair' election only months ago, being banned.

(Ref: *Bangladesh Crisis and Indian Foreign Policy*, Dr S.R. Sharma, New Delhi: Young Asia Publications, [p. 25])

### **Echoes of Army crackdown Worldwide Reactions**

*The Asian Recorder Reports*

Under the caption, "Pakistani Campaign To Drive Out Bengalis From East Bengal", (18-24 June 1971), it said:

*"A survey of refugee camps in two districts has shown signs of a systematic campaign by the Martial Law Administration to drive out people it considered expendable or undesirable.*

*Most of them are from towns and cities occupied by troops, from villages within 12 kms of these centers. They were forced to flee by the troops who raided their villages, burned huts and took away the livestock. The troops while leaving invariably warned the villagers to quit. If they did not, they would be butchered. Muslim League supporters, mostly immigrants from Bihar, visited the villages soon afterwards to ensure that the warning was heeded.*

*A large number of villagers were hunted from village to village till they crossed the border. Some who managed to return after being in hiding, found their homes already occupied by immigrants from Bihar.*

*Authorities in some border districts were of the view that Pakistan had launched this 'operation deportation' with several objectives. One of them was to impose a strain on the Indian economy.*

*The martial law administration was determined to exterminate or eliminate people who supported the Awami League and did not take kindly to the West Pakistani domination. The Army wrath fell mainly on the Hindus for they were firm supporters of the Awami League". (25 June-1 July 1971)*

Additionally, the report went on to say:

*"The Pakistan Air Force rained napalm and plastic bombs on the thickly populated Islampur, Sasai, Akhnaur, Daudpur, Chandura, Khetabari and Satbarak villages near Tripura's border with Comilla and Sylhet districts. Flames shot up sky-high as the villages caught fire. Hapless unarmed civilians either abandoned their homes or were killed in the blaze".*

*Asian Recorder, in its 14-20 May issue of 1971, quotes Bangla Radio as claiming that the overall strength of the Pakistan army "now deployed in Bangladesh" was about 80,000; that of the liberation forces was reckoned at 50,000.*

*"On March 29, in an attempt to recapture some of the territories liberated by Bangladesh freedom fighters in four days of fighting, the army threw in paratroopers for the first time, even as casualties rose to an estimated 300,000 people killed, mostly unarmed civilians."*

That these figures need to be taken with more than a pinch of salt is patent, but then the dimension of the problem was also clear.

## **Other Reactions**

### **USSR**

President Podgorny of the USSR wrote to President Yahya Khan to say:

"We convey our concern for safety of Awami League leaders including Mujibur Rehman...there was an implied charge of genocide in the appeal where it invoked the Universal Declaration of Human Rights...that talks had broken off and military administration found it possible to resort to extreme measures and used armed force against the people of East Pakistan which met with great alarm in USSR. We cannot but be concerned with the numerous casualties, the sufferings and privations that such a development brings to the people of Pakistan. Concern is also caused by the arrest of Mujibur Rehman and other politicians who had received such convincing support by the overwhelming majority of the population of East Pakistan at recent elections..."

(14-20 May, *Asian Recorder*)

### **UK**

UK expressed regret over the "loss of life" ...but refused to condemn the brutalities perpetrated by the troops. Whereupon a Labour MP asked of the government to express its abhorrence of brutalities and repressive measures. Sir Alec Douglas Hume responded:

"Everybody abhors violence.....the Pakistani president was faced with a situation where the country would have fallen into two parts."

(14-20 May, *Asian Recorder*)

### **The US Stand**

The State Department said it regarded the 'civil war' to be an internal matter and indicated that the use of "US supplied arms was covered by a military aid agreement". "We simply do not have information that confirms that US supplied arms have been used in this situation. Obviously, it is a matter of concern to us". The US hoped for a peaceful settlement of Pakistan's 'civil war'.

### **US Senators' Condemnation**

Senator Edward Kennedy (D) raised his voice against these killings, especially of dissident leaders and intellectuals, and asked the US to condemn them, and to stop them. He spoke of "a story of indiscriminate killings and executions of dissident political leaders and students and citizens and civilians suffering and dying".

Giving his support, Senator B. Saxbe (R) said that he was distressed also because Pakistan which had received arms from the USA, the Soviet Union and China was using American weapons "probably because they were the best."

(14-20 May)

### **Ambassador K.B. Keating**

Keating said in Bombay, on 15 April that his government did "not view the current tragic events in East Bengal as an internal affair of Pakistan". He said that the 'international community could not remain indifferent' to it.

### **Keating's Contemporary Archives**

1-8 May 1971 issue of the Archives shed further light on the events: "*With official communications between East Pakistan and the rest of the world cut, and a rigorous press censorship in force, the only news of the civil war in the province came from the clandestine radio broadcasts, from refugees crossing into India, and from statements by foreign press correspondents after they had left East Pakistan for the outside world, and from Indian newspapers. ...Reports from Calcutta on March 28-29 spoke of fierce fighting in Dhaka, Rangpura, Comilla and other centers in East Pakistan.*"

*This censorship made it near impossible for foreign correspondents to send out any dispatches to the outside world... Two journalists, however, Simon*

*Dring, of The Daily Telegraph and Michel Laurent, an Associated Press photographer, evaded this round up...made an extensive tour of Dhaka and succeeded in leaving East Pakistan by plane. He (Dring) described Dhaka as "a crushed and frightened city, after 24 hours of ruthless shelling by the Pakistan Army, saying that as many as "7,000 people were dead" and that "large areas had been levelled".*

*Michel Laurent, a dispatch from whom was published in The Times on March 30, spoke in similar terms.*

*In his dispatch published in The Daily Telegraph, Dring said that "there is no doubt that the army is in control of all the towns and major population centers", but alleged that "people are still being shot at the slightest provocation", and that buildings were being indiscriminately destroyed. While it is impossible to accurately assess what all this has so far meant in terms of innocent lives...reports beginning to filter the outlying areas, Chittagong, Comilla and Jessore put the figure including Dhaka, in the region of 15,000 dead."*

*After saying that the "first target as the tanks rolled into the night of the 25th were the students ", Simon Dring added: "[It is] estimated three battalions were used in the attack on Dhaka—one armoured, one artillery and one infantry...Led by American supplied M24 World War II tanks one column of tanks sped to Dhaka University shortly after midnight...Caught completely by surprise, some 200 students were killed in the Iqbal Block, Headquarters of the anti-government student's union. Shells slammed into the building and their rooms were sprayed with machine gun fire. Two days later, bodies were still smouldering in their burning rooms, others were scattered outside and more floated in a nearby lake...By 2 a.m. on the 26th fires were burning all over the city. Troops had occupied the University and surrounding areas and were busy killing students still in hiding and replacing independence flags with Pakistani national standards. There was still heavy shelling in some areas but fighting was noticeably beginning to slacken. Opposite the Intercontinental Hotel a platoon of troops stormed the empty offices of Dhaka People newspaper burning it down with most other houses in the area..."*

*Simon Dring's dispatch continued: "Shortly before dawn the firing stopped...and an eerie silence settled over the city...But the worse was yet to come. At midday, again without any warning, columns of troops poured into the old section of the city where a million people live in a sprawling maze of narrow winding streets. For the next 11 hours they proceeded systematically to*

*devastate large areas of the old town, where Sheikh Mujib had some of his strongest support among the people in Dhaka..."*

*Simon Dring alleged that some 7000 civilians, men, women and children had died in the area which had virtually been razed.*

*Michel Laurent, whose dispatch appeared on March 30 in the Times as stated, also estimated that some 7,000 people had died in Dhaka alone in "two days and nights of shelling by the Pakistan army." Like Dring, he said that the attack had been aimed at the University and the populous Old City where Sheikh Mujib had his strongest following; that there had been heavy loss of life among students at Dhaka University, notably at Iqbal Hall; and that large parts of the Old City had been destroyed. Laurent alleged that the Pakistan government "went to extreme lengths to prevent a large contingent of foreign journalists from witnessing the army intervention and the subsequent violence."*

*Statements issued by Martial Law Authorities during the last 4 or 5 days of March, however, claimed that the Army was in full control, of the situation throughout East Pakistan, and that life was rapidly returning to normal.*

*British High Commissioner in Pakistan, Sir Cyril Pickard, was called to the Pakistan Foreign Office in Islamabad on March 27 to receive a complaint that the BBC and other responsible news media had, it was alleged, been issuing "unauthenticated and tendentious" reports about events in East Pakistan derived from "sources known to be hostile to Pakistan."*

*The US ambassador, Mr Joseph S. Farland, was also called to the Foreign Office to receive a similar complaint about the Voice of America broadcasts.*

*British refugees from East Pakistan, arriving at Calcutta spoke on 6 April of "bloody massacres" and "mass murder" in and around Chittagong, a Dhaka engineer saying that he had seen "bodies piled high in the gutters" and "dogs and crows eating corpses in the streets 9 days after they had fallen there." Refugees spoke of mass killings and shootings by both sides—the army and the Awami League supporters—and estimated the dead as many thousands.*

*(Ref: 1-8 May 1971 Keating's Contemporary Archives, Pages 24,568 and 24,569)*

Earlier, the then Pakistan president General Yahya Khan had broadcast to the nation denouncing Sheikh Mujibur Rehman's non-cooperation movement as "an act of treason", and described Sheikh Mujib himself and his party as "enemies of Pakistan", who wanted to break away completely from the country,

and said that "this crime will not go unpunished".

It was indeed tragic that on 14 January the same year, addressing a press conference in Dhaka, Yahya Khan had spoken of the Sheikh as Pakistan's "future prime minister".

(14-20 May, *Asian Recorder*)

## **Aftermath of the Crackdown and Evolution of US Strategy for the Subcontinent in 1971**

The original policy options favoured neutrality and inaction, generally, its hands being occupied with several other issues. Yet, the US did not want that other powers be permitted to take advantage of this and fill the space.

The 'tilt' towards Pakistan, supposedly came after Indian intervention in East Pakistan. Though, in a manner of speaking, it had always been there, in reality and in Indian perception.

Pakistan as a conduit to China came, therefore, to be greatly valued by the US; that had a much higher priority in US thinking; not the sufferings of East Pakistan or the killings, or a sure dismemberment of Pakistan in the process. The arrangement served a larger strategic purpose of weakening the Soviet Union.

At the tactical level, secret negotiations were already on with the PRC, for Pakistan wanted China to 'show force' on the Eastern front, somehow, anyhow, so as to keep Indian mountain divisions pinned in the East. And in case China 'attacked' India to help Pakistan, well then there was the USSR, but they wanted no war with the US. There was a new great game being played in the subcontinent, in 1971, only the actors were different, as were the objectives.

The US initially wanted to 'avoid' getting embroiled in this messy situation, but the speed with which events developed leading to crisis situations, did not permit this luxury.

The initial US approach of feigned inaction was to end in feverish action, culminating in the dispatch of the Seventh Fleet to the Bay of Bengal, in December 1971. The US has had a certain consistency in its propensity and that, too, of 'going along with' dictatorial regimes in Pak repeatedly, and always after initial noise, backing them for fear that a more democratic alternative could be inimical to the US interests. This has been demonstrated, decade after decade, one military dictator after another.

---

<sup>1</sup>The Night of the Long Knives (Saturday 30 June and Sunday 1 July 1934) (*German, Nacht der langen Messer*), also known as *Reichsmordwoche*, 'Operation Hummingbird' or 'the Blood Purge', was a lethal purge of Adolf Hitler's potential political rivals in the Sturmabteilung (SA; also known as storm troopers or brownshirts). The SA was the paramilitary organisation of the Nazi Party that had helped the Nazis rise to power in the Twenties, culminating with Hitler being appointed chancellor of Germany in 1933. The name, 'Night of the Long Knives', is a reference to the massacre of Vortigern's men by Angle, Jute, and Saxon mercenaries in the Arthurian myth.

<sup>2</sup>Stephen Cohen, *The Idea of Pakistan*, p.74.

<sup>3</sup>Secretary of state and president's assistant for National Security Affairs respectively.

<sup>4</sup>Chapter XXI, *The India-Pakistan Crisis of 1971, Military Crackdown (White House Years*, Henry Kissinger, [Boston: Little Brown, 1979], p. 854).

## **Chapter Two**

## **Confronting the Challenge: Contingency Planning on South Asia—July 1971**

**'Analytical Summary Prepared by the USG National Security Council Staff 12 July 1971'.**

Three months after the traumatic events following the army crackdown of 25 March, this appreciation of events, painstakingly prepared by the dedicated staff of the US National Security apparatus is of considerable significance. It is a clear pointer to the USG's thinking and perception of events in South Asia. We will, therefore, dwell upon it in some detail.

The study claims to highlight three important aspects:

- *A description of present US strategy and steps taken to prevent the outbreak of hostilities;*
- *Additional steps in pursuing this strategy that could be considered in the coming few weeks;*
- *A discussion of the options open to the US should hostilities occur between India and Pakistan.*

(Ref: Document 101, *Foreign Relations, 1969-1976, Volume XI, South Asia Crisis, 1971.*)

The discussion further occurs under three major headings viz. 'present strategy', 'limitation of present strategy' and 'additional steps'. Most importantly,

present strategy is declared as being based on a major assumption concerning US interests and objectives in South Asia being: that the US has "no vital interest in South Asia"; this is, however, modified with a caveat that "as a global power the US is inevitably concerned about the stability of an area where such a large percentage of mankind reside and which is geopolitically significant in terms of the Soviets and the Communist Chinese". It is conceded that both India and Pakistan are important to US interests, though India is of "potentially greater significance" and deserves "relative preeminence" in formulating policy.

As usual, "peace" is projected as being essential to the maintenance of US interests and, therefore, the "basic objective" being to "prevent hostilities" in the region. This is, in turn translated as maintaining, at the operational level, "constructively close" relationship with India and "reasonable" relations with Pakistan while "avoiding steps which would do irreparable damage to a yet undefined future relationship with East Pakistan".

The three major ingredients to the strategy followed since the outbreak of fighting on 25 March are prioritised as 'restraint'; 'international assistance' and political accommodation, in that order.

Restraint, therefore, has been counselled on both India and Pakistan. This restraint has reinforced important elements on the Indian side positively, although "contingency planning for an attack against East Pakistan continues", and there is considerable public and parliamentary pressure for more forceful action; counsels for restraint in Pakistan have been "somewhat less successful".

As far as international assistance goes the study claims the US as having offered grants of \$70.5 million and a \$20 million loan to India for refugee rehabilitation, recognising that to be the "most likely proximate cause for escalation". It is conceded that "this, however, leaves untouched the serious social and internal political problem generated by the refugees in India that we can do nothing about (emphasis added)". On the Pakistani side also, the study adopts a self-congratulatory posture for the USG (in full) having assisted materially with immediate relief needs and to "facilitate the return of refugees".

"We have urged the West Pakistanis to proceed as expeditiously as possible", with political accommodation in East Pakistan. "Recognising the complex and sensitive issues involved and the fact that Yahya Khan may have only limited political flexibility", we have not attempted to spell out the details of such accommodation beyond the need to "deal with representative political leaders". These efforts have not yet led to a "meaningful basis for a political settlement".

## **The US Peep Show**

These sketches are the US assessments of the principal personalities, or the "Dramatis Personae" as per the US viewpoint:

### **Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto**

*A daughter of Bhutto was accepted as a student at Radcliffe in the autumn of 1969. Bhutto wanted to get his sons educated at Harvard. He himself is a University of California graduate in political science. Bhutto has two wives. Begum Nusrat Bhutto of Iranian extraction, and a Sindhi wife who remains in the village.*

*Views on US. During long election campaign, Bhutto did considerable sniping at US' allegations of US "interference". When his supporters made slanderous statements and our embassy protested, Bhutto professed ignorance and undertook to stop them.*

**Indo-Pak.** *Bhutto has maintained hard line public stance against India, particularly on Kashmir and Indian high commission officials here regard him as dangerously jingoistic.*

**Relations with Communist powers.** *In campaign Bhutto praised China as (a) true friend of Pakistan and frequently sniped at Soviets.*

**Economic policy.** *Focal point of campaign was promise to break power of 20 families and feudalists and afford full economic justice to people. How he would accomplish this remained vague.*

**Political system.** *Bhutto questioned suitability of parliamentary democracy for Pakistan and thought the most appropriate structure would include a constitutional role for the military. Earlier, he had predicted to former Counsel General in Karachi that 'if Mujibur Rehman became prime minister he would fail within a year;' that it would eventually become Bhutto's turn and he would govern as "a strong man within the Turkish model; 'with army in the wings'.*

*Detractors see him as ruthless, unprincipled and opportunist, primarily concerned about gaining power and interested in common man and his problems only as means to this end. In September, Yahya Khan told Ambassador Farland he 'considered Bhutto a bright demagogue, power-crazy and fascist at heart.'*

(Ref: "The American Papers" Secret and Confidential India-Pakistan-Bangladesh Documents 1965-1973, pp. 430-33.)

### **Yahya Khan's Views on Bhutto**

*"Bhutto was born to a very wealthy and conservative family. He has an educational background which is considered outstanding. He received training both in the UK and in the US. Ayub Khan recognized Bhutto's talents and took him into the power center while Bhutto was in his early 30's. When Bhutto fell from Ayub's favour, he came to me (Yahya Khan) for advice. I told him to move slowly as his future was still ahead of him. Bhutto left Pakistan for some months and returned apparently with the desire to topple all that stood in his way. It was at this time that he began his socialist rantings. He is not a socialist but an extremely bright opportunist who has sensed the direction of the political tide now turning and has adapted his entire posture to it. He is fearful of Mujibur Rehman neither because of Mujibur Rehman's abilities nor his political philosophy but because Bhutto recognizes the strength of Mujibur Rehman's present political position and the need to reckon with it. It is more for pragmatic reasons than philosophical that Bhutto has aligned himself with China. Bhutto promises all things to all men and there is going to (be) trouble in attempting to fulfill his public and private commitments."*

(Ref: "The American Papers" Secret and Confidential India-Pakistan-Bangladesh Documents 1965-1973, p. 482.)

### **Sheikh Mujibur Rehmanur Rehman**

The stunning Awami League victory was less the victory of a party than the personal triumph of a single man, the undisputed leader of this all-powerful party, Sheikh Mujibur Rehmanur Rehman.

*Mujibur Rehman is a life long, full-time politician. He has spent 10 years in Pakistani jails, climaxed by the Agartala conspiracy case, which martyred him in the eyes of the East Pakistani people and guaranteed his rise to power.*

*Mujibur Rehman, the man, is hard to characterize. In private meetings he is charming, calm and confident. While not a worldly sophisticate of Bhutto's stripe, he is well traveled and urbane. He knows Europe, UK, as well as China*

*and the US. On the rostrum, he is a fiery orator who can mesmerize hundreds of thousands in pouring rain. As a party leader he is tough and authorititive, often arrogant. Mujibur Rehman has something of the messianic complex which has been reinforced by the heady experience of mass adulation. He talks of "my people, my land, my forests, my river." It seems clear that he views himself as the personification of Bengali aspirations.*

*Mujibur Rehman has also shown himself to be impulsive and emotional when talking of Bengali grievances. He is primarily a man of action—a mass leader. Mujibur Rehman has concerned himself little with foreign affairs. Officially he is for "genuine neutrality, withdrawal from CENTO and SEATO and improved relations with India."*

*Better relations with India will probably be his most pressing concern since he sees atleast partial solution to East Pakistan's problems in expanded trade with neighbouring India. Mujibur Rehman, like many Bengalis, is not (except for record) particularly hard on Kashmir. Also, like many Bengalis he believes the Farakka issue could be resolved in the context of general improvement in Indo-Pak relations.*

*Mujibur Rehman is well disposed towards the USA. He has visited China on two occasions. He admits to finding the Chinese experiments impressive but notes the restrictive and oppressive nature of the society was very apparent to him.*

*(Ref: "The American Papers" Secret and Confidential India-Pakistan-Bangladesh Documents 1965-1973, p. 435.)*

#### **'Yahya Khan's views on Mujibur Rehman as told to Farland in February 1971'**

*"Mujibur Rehman's formal education was adequate but not extensive. His life had been preoccupied with political agitation prior to 1947 and also subsequently. The development of the Six-Points was the outgrowth of a provincial attitude built upon Bengali nationalism. Mujibur Rehman's preoccupations (sic) are totally Bengali preoccupations, trade being one, he most certainly would favour close economic ties with India.*

*Mujibur Rehman has rekindled the fires of Bengali nationalism to the point where they may be difficult to control.*

*Rehman is fearful of Bhutto because he realizes that Bhutto is educationally*

*far better equipped, more knowledgeable and adroit in public affairs and is "faster on his feet" in any area outside East Pakistan.*

(Ref: "The American Papers" Secret and Confidential India-Pakistan-Bangladesh Documents 1965-1973, p.481)

**President Yahya Khan's comments on Bhutto and Mujib (made to Farland)  
2 February 1971**

*Yahya Khan said he had also pointed out to both Bhutto and Mujibur Rehman the provincial nature of their source of power. He noted that Mujibur Rehman had no political support in the west wing and that Bhutto had received no support in the East wing.*

*Yahya Khan reiterated again and again and emphasized that he would not validate a constitution which was so parochial that it would in effect be the death knell of Pakistan as it now exists.*

(Ref: "The American Papers" Secret and Confidential India-Pakistan-Bangladesh Documents 1965-1973, p.482)

**US Policy: On the Horns of a Dilemma**

*"We have so far attempted to remain neutral and uninvolved. Our line has been that we favour the unity of Pakistan and that it is up to the Pakistanis to determine the future of their country—Should the US be hedging its bets with East Pakistan against the possibility that East secedes?*

*We are after all witnessing the possible birth of a new nation of over 70 million people in an unstable area of Asia and, while not the controlling factor, we could have something to do with how this comes about—peacefully or by bloody civil war."*

(Ref: Document 2, Foreign Relations, 1969-1976, Vol XI, South Asia Crisis, 1971.)

It was also surmised that this was not an East-West, or a US-Soviet, or a US-Indian confrontation. "The US, USSR and India all have an interest in the continued unity of Pakistan and have nothing to gain from a break-up".

The general conclusion was that the US had no vital interest at stake in South Asia; and, therefore, prominent recommendation was for a "hands-off" policy of "massive inaction", with an implicit caveat that as a global power it had worldwide responsibilities which would continue to be performed.

Mr Johnson U. Alexis said: "We have no control over the events which will determine the outcome and very little influence." In the US Calculations it was further factored that "Bhutto is almost unparalledly unfriendly to the US". As far as Mujib went, although he was "moderate and pro-western, siding in his behalf would be detrimental to the unity and integrity of Pakistan as he was adamant on the issue of achieving a large degree of autonomy. His six-point charter of demands envisaged only defence and foreign affairs as the central subjects and all other matters reverting to provincial control". This would also, of course, include finance as it had been an old grouse and a cause belle that financially East Pakistan had continuously been deprived of its due share.

Three options were, therefore, considered as being available. One, was to support Yahya Khan to the hilt in whatsoever he does politically as well as militarily. The second: to adopt a posture of strict neutrality, i.e., considering issues on their merits and possibly even incorporating a shade of human idealism. The moral imperative, so to speak. The third option was to adopt publicly an equally friendly posture towards both West and East Pakistan, while in actual fact supporting Yahya in preference to Mujib. East Pakistan with its almost total lack of resources and infrastructure, a burgeoning population and proneness to natural calamities and disasters, would become "an international basket case".

Having in mind the dispatches of their two ambassadors/emissaries, namely, Keating and Blood, Dr Kissinger observed caustically: "Sending the American Ambassador to argue against moving doesn't buy us the worst of everything."

Above all in the face of an American dilemma: "the real issue is whether we involve ourselves or not". This was because, "US should avoid being placed in a situation where it could be accused of having encouraged the break-up of Pakistan". Whereafter Dr Kissinger observed: "Then the prognosis is for civil war resulting eventually in independence or for independence fairly quickly." Further, it was his belief that the Indians preferred Pakistan to be united because of the pressure an independent Bengal would create on India! It was agreed that: "All the principal countries (the Soviet Union, India, and the US) feel that the integrity of Pakistan is in their interest".

"Can 30,000 troops do anything against 75 million people?" Dr Kissinger

put it to his staff. This was a question, frequently asked and replied along with a number of loaded observations, implications and suggestions. Someone observed that the "Bengalis are an extremely politically conscious people but they are not fighters". Dr Kissinger added that the 'Bengalis have been extremely difficult to govern throughout their history". The army's reign of terror unleashed in East Pakistan, aimed at eliminating the core of future resistance with some wondering whether the present the US posture of simply ignoring the atrocities was the right one, as it would make it "vulnerable to the charges of callous political calculation over a man made disaster". Somewhere down the line Dr Kissinger meaningfully responded, "Look what the British did when they took India."

He further observed, "Sentiment in India may be the first to force the Indians to recognize (Bangladesh) unless Ambassador Keating beats them to the punch." He then went on to gravely observe: "India is the one country that would suffer from the establishment of an East Pakistan."

A prescient observation, unusual, but singularly far seeing.

This further led to a speculation that if "Indians recognized the government of Bangladesh, the Pakistanis might recognize Kashmir". When the matter of killings at the Dhaka University was brought in, Dr Kissinger could not help observing, "Did they kill Prof. Razak? He was one of my students." Mr Blee said: "I think so. They killed a lot of people at the university." Dr Kissinger summed it up pungently: "They didn't dominate 400 million Indians all those years by being gentle."

During discussions an official said: "I share Consul General Dhaka's view that Yahya's short term action has probably made inevitable the thing he is ostensibly seeking to prevent in the long term: the disintegration of Pakistan." This invited another hard headed response from Dr Kissinger, who, to put things in perspective said: "West Pakistan establishment is now not about to give up voluntarily what it has engaged to protect by the bayonet." He then aptly asked: "How does East Pakistan strengthen West Pakistan?"

Admiral Moorer: "It provides the Pakistan Government with more foreign exchange. Also, it has more people than West Pakistan."

*"As we view the subcontinent in terms of our relative interests, our interest in India is probably greater than our interest in Pakistan, although not in absolute terms." Dr Kissinger continued: "If the President decides to work through the existing government, with some humanitarian wrinkles."*

It was further pointed out that the main opposition to Mujib was leftist, though, of course, an extreme right radical faction also existed. The difficulty

was that all the moderate leadership was now "mostly in jail or dead". This being the case, who was the one to deal with? It was considered that with time the extremists or leftist elements were likely to take over the resistance movement and something needed to be done to offset this possibility. Dr Kissinger, however, voiced caution and noted that "the President had a special feeling about Pakistan".

When Kissinger discussed these issues later with President Nixon, the latter observed, *"The people who bitch about Vietnam, bitch about it because we intervened in what they say is a civil war. Now some of those same bastards want us to intervene here—both civil wars."*

## Solution

Three alternative postures were available for US adoption: 1) *"Business as usual"* 2) *"Sanctions against West Pakistan"* 3) *"Maintaining options in both East and West Pakistan"*. *"Nixon approved Option Number 3 and added a hand written note that reads: "To all hands. Don't squeeze Yahya at this time." He underlined "Don't" three times."*

(Ref: Documents 28 and 36, Foreign Relations, 1969-1976, Vol XI, South Asia Crisis, 1971.)

## Scepticism

Notwithstanding his knowledge that Nixon had a special relationship with Yahya Khan, but striking a discordant note the US Ambassador to India George Keating kept feeding the State Department with views like: *"I believe the United States, whether we like it or not, bears very heavy responsibility for the continuing deterioration of the situation. Unless forceful and effective action is promptly undertaken to stem the refugee flow the GO I will be forced into an act of desperation to halt a situation that is clearly not of India's making".*

Keating, therefore, strongly recommended that the time was overdue for the United States to utilise all leverage available to pressure the government of Pakistan into halting the terror and repression of the army in the East Wing. Under the existing conditions for the United States to call on India to restraint amounted, in Keating's view, to putting the shoe on the wrong foot. While reporting to the State Department:

*Keating painted a grim picture of the situation in East Pakistan. He suggested that Nixon could put pressure on Pakistan to stop what he described as "genocide" in East Pakistan by withholding economic assistance. Referring to the flood of 5 million refugees into India he mentioned that this was growing at the rate of 150 thousand (humans) per day! The strain on India was horrendous. Keating went on to point out the dangerous aspect: that the situation was further inflamed by a deliberate Pak policy of driving out and killing the Hindus in East Pakistan. He assessed that India wanted the killing stopped and a 'climate created in East Pakistan which would be conducive to the return of the refugees'. It was his (Keating's) view that 'India had adopted a moderate position and was seeking a political solution to the mounting crisis'; that no political settlement could evolve without talking to the leaders of the outlawed Awami League. In his opinion, "the old Pakistan was through." Keating significantly indicated his awareness that Nixon had a special relationship with Yahya but he still wanted to endorse a recommendation.*

*(Ref: Document 72, Foreign Relations, 1969-1976, Vol XI, South Asia Crisis, 1971.)*

### **Enigma of US Policy**

Chester Bowles was the US ambassador in India for eight long years. He has written in his book, Promises to Keep that his sustained efforts to persuade his government to change its policy in (p. 133) South Asia and to stop arming Pakistan utterly failed (emphasis added) to achieve any positive result. Years later, it appeared that Ambassador Keating felt likewise. One is not too sure about another outstanding American in the line, John Kenneth Galbraith.

### **Washington Special Actions Group Meeting (Subject Pakistan), 26 May 1971**

(The background of the discussion is the frequent allegations made by Pakistani officials including their president, General Yahya Khan that India had been adopting intimidating postures and interfering in the internal affairs of their country.)

*Kissinger: (Referring to map) What are those four divisions in the center of*

*India?*

*Helms: Those are their reserves.*

*K: And the red line is where the Pakistani troops are?*

*H: Yes.*

*K: What do you think the Indians really want in East Pakistan? Do they want the situation to quiet down so that the refugees can return? Do they see this as an opportunity to weaken Pakistan? Or don't they know what they want?*

*Van Hollen: The Indians want, first, a cessation of the civil strife in East Pakistan to stem the flow of refugees. Second, they want a moderate, independent regime in East Pakistan. They are concerned that over a period of time the radical element there may take over and link up with radicals in India.*

*K: They are aiming for an independent Bangladesh under moderate leadership?*

*Johnson: Yes.*

*Van Hollen: Until March 25, India saw their interest served by a united Pakistan in which the Bengali element would be dominant. When the Pakistani military moved into East Pakistan, India's estimate of their own best interest shifted, and they now favour an independent Bangladesh with a moderate leadership.*

*K: Is India prepared to take military action?*

*Johnson: I notice the paper. It refers to a "lightening attack". I don't see how this kind of attack could be successful. It would turn into a long drawn out war. Pakistan would probably attack on the west as well and India would be engaged in a two front war. There is also the uncertainty of what China would do in this situation. According to Helms report, the Indians are taking a very sober attitude. That's encouraging.*

*Helms: The Indian military seems to be taking a serious and responsible view.*

*Kissinger: The rainy season is approaching. This is not a good time for any military operation.*

*General Westmoreland: General Manekshaw, the Indian Army Chief, is in the US and was in to see me the other day. Also, you know, I visited there not too long ago. The Indian politicians seem eager to intervene in East Pakistan, but their position has apparently been modified and they now seem to have a more sober perspective. General Manekshaw gave the credit*

*to the military for this sobering influence.*

*Kissinger: What would be the advantage to India of seizing a limited area in East Pakistan?*

*Van Hollen: The only point would be in the context of the refugee problem. An attempt to obtain lebensraum for the refugees and would be a little more acceptable to international opinion. Kissinger: But they could get into a scrap with 55 thousand Pakistani troops. They couldn't achieve their objective until they had defeated them. By that time the issue would have been settled. I know nothing about Pakistan but if India should attack, the practical outcome would be India's defeat—if Chinese Communist or other forces should come in—or, more probably, an independent Bangladesh. Those 55 thousand Pakistani troops won't let India seize part of their territory on which to settle refugees.*

*Gen W: The only feasible Indian objective would be seizure of an enclave to assist them in settling the refugees.*

*Kissinger: But there is no viable area of East Pakistan where they could settle 3 million refugees. It's already overcrowded. Supposing that were their objective, how would they do it?*

*Van Hollen: The Indians could say that the influx of refugees constitutes intervention in the internal affairs of India. In order to relieve this situation, the refugees must return to East Pakistan*

*Kissinger: The Indians are not that unsubtle.*

(Ref: Document 60, *Foreign Relations, 1969-1976, Vol XI, South Asia Crisis, 1971.*)

## SITUATION IN JUNE 1971

### Indian Foreign Minister Visits the US—June 1971

India's foreign minister Sardar Swaran Singh visited the US on 16 June 1971. At a joint meeting with President Nixon and Henry Kissinger, Swaran Singh stated that the US government 'well knew the major issues involved'. However, as President Nixon insisted that he state his case, Swaran Singh gave a brief but (unusually, for him) a to the point presentation highlighting them.

The refugee problem had already assumed back-breaking dimensions, their numbers being close to six million already in India. The problem, therefore,

begged an urgent solution as no country could continue to labour under that kind of burden, and as now 'imposed upon India's security and well-being owing to the refugee influx and the prevailing environment in its immediate neighbourhood and borders'.

United States government officials were pleased that Swaran Singh did not lecture them about any prescribed solution. Kissinger mentioned that the USG's surmise of the situation largely coincided with Swaran Singh's, adding also that there were problems which just could not be solved in one go but needed time and patience for their settlement. He promised to look into the question of helping India reduce the burden of the ongoing refugee problem to the extent possible.

The ground data was horrifying. About thirteen percent of East Pakistan's population had been pushed out and forced into India. It was both, no less than an act of demographic aggression against the Indian state and a genocide within Bangladesh.

### **Yahya Khan's Letter**

Swaran Singh's visit was followed immediately by a letter from Yahya Khan to President Nixon.

*Henry Kissinger summarized the letter in a July 2 memorandum to President Nixon. He felt that the letter was intended to make certain that Pakistan's "side of the story" was being heard in Washington in the wake of Foreign Minister Singh's visit. Kissinger concluded of the letter that: "I like the Indian presentation; it is a brief for a position, and the truth probably lies somewhere between the two."*

(Ref: Document 76, *Foreign Relations, 1969-1976, Vol XI, South Asia Crisis, 1971.*)

**28 JUNE 1971**

### **Kellogg's Visit to Pakistan**

Kellogg<sup>1</sup> was sent to Pakistan with the aim of helping and persuading Yahya

Khan to see reason and to recognise the realities of the refugee problem.

While talking to Kellogg, President Yahya Khan said that India's strategy was to exploit the presence of displaced peoples in India to aggravate a tense situation and to justify military intervention in East Pakistan.

Yahya Khan then went on to make a curious statement which does not appear to have been highlighted before, not even in the Indian press. When told by Kellogg that he had seen and talked to a number of groups of refugees coming into India who seemed to be simple agrarian folk driven by fear, with "anxiety writ large on their faces", Yahya Khan brushed that aside by saying that in all likelihood they were "gangs of destitutes from amongst India's own population"!

Yahya Khan made light of this huge influx of refugees, and allegations of social and economic burden they were placing on India. He was of the view that such reports were just exaggerated Indian propaganda, "notwithstanding the fact that since independence Pakistan had received millions of refugees from India, a large number of whom still remain unsettled." With vehemence in his voice he added that "efforts to impose a political government of Indian choice on Pakistan would come to nought". "No government could yield to such blackmail."

## SITUATION IN JULY 1971

Kissinger briefly visited India between 6-7 July 1971. During this period he met Indian leaders including Sardar Swaran Singh, Jagjivan Ram (the Defence minister) and the prime minister Mrs Indira Gandhi. These leaders laid emphasis on the refugee problem which had become a "back-breaking" burden by then. Mrs Gandhi explained that the utmost limit of their country's threshold of tolerance had been crossed.

P.N. Haksar, the Indian prime minister's personal secretary beseeched Kissinger movingly: "We don't want to go to war, but we not know how not to". He earnestly lamented the erosion of Indo-US relations and expressed anxiety about the continuing arms aid to Pakistan.

Swaran Singh, cross-questioned Dr Kissinger closely on the reported continuance of arms supplies to Pakistan and managed to corner him embarrassingly, saying if Indian officials had behaved (as irresponsibly as their US counterparts and as explained by Kissinger by way of subterfuge) "they would have been taken to task". Kissinger promised to 'pull up things' but was obviously not in the least pleased with his welcome during his brief stay in India.

He was also annoyed with the bitter media hostility that he then faced.

### **Kissinger Visits China—July 1971 (Secretly)**

After his India visit, Kissinger went to Pakistan to inform his hosts how hostile the Indian feelings were and also what a hostile press he had had in India. And how, coming to Pakistan after India, felt like a happy "homecoming".

After reassuring talks with his Pakistani hosts, he complained of stomach problem and retiring to the cover of the hill station of Murree, proceeded on a secret trip to Peking.

Kissinger met Chou en Lai and had detailed talks with him on the developing international scenario including the crisis building up in East Pakistan. Both shared their common disapproval of Indian actions. Chou en Lai assured him that in the event of India committing aggression against Pakistan, say by an invasion of East Pakistan, China would not "watch idly".

The talks also concerned themselves with their mutual assent to consolidate and move their relationship forward, with China making no secret of how upset it was with Russian behaviour. It was during this trip that a foundation was also laid for President Nixon's visit to China.

Kissinger returned anointed, and with the euphoria of having accomplished an historic mission, a new breakthrough in international relations.

### **Kissinger on India—July 1971**

The US also let it be known to India, in no uncertain terms, that if they went to war, there will be "unshirted hell to pay" (is a queer expression even in yankee lexicon, presuming there is a shirted twin). It was further considered that the Indians were suspicious of the US—they thought the US was pro-Pakistan. "They will understand pressure if they believe we seriously want to help." (Doc. 105) But look, "we gave India \$50 million to help with the refugees, yet they are refusing Thant's request for a UN presence on the Indian side of the border"!

Kissinger went on to say: "There is no question that this is an issue of profound emotion to the Indians". Privately, he said that the "Indians have a tendency to build up hysteria from which they won't know how to escape". His officers agreed: "Indian psychology is such that they may well paint themselves into a corner to the point that the only alternative they can see is the use of force." Kissinger said: "The Indians know they have received more US aid than

any other nation. However, when I was there, the press was vicious and they made no effort to calm it down. *I wonder if this is the result of the situation, or whether it is helping to create it. If we assume that the question of human suffering is a big factor in the Indian outrage (although I have my own views on the Indian attitude towards human suffering), if they knock off east Pakistan, it will produce an upheaval, with untold human suffering in West Pakistan. I don't think the Indians have a master plan but they could slide into a major crisis".*

(Ref. Document 105, Foreign Relations, 1969-1979, Vol. XI, South Asian Crisis, 1971.)

### **Dialogue Between President Nixon and Secretary Kissinger**

K: "We want the flow of refugees reduced to a trickle".

N: "As long as the Pakistan army is both fighting and running the country they won't be able to do much".

K: "But before we can get Pakistanis to do something, India must give some visible evidence that they are not engaging in these border crossings. Just the other day they destroyed a bunch of power houses and they are attacking soldiers in their barracks. As long as there is military activity by India, Pakistan won't move. I am not sure India does not want to see this turmoil continue".

(Ref: Document 105, Foreign Relations, 1969-1976, Vol XI, South Asia Crisis, 1971.)

President: *I know, the Indians. Awful, but they are getting some assistance from Keating, of course.*

Kissinger: *A lot of assistance; he is practically their mouthpiece.*

P: *I talked to Bill [Rogers] in California while I was waiting for you. He is down on Keating; he is a total mouthpiece for the Indians.*

K: *He has gone native. As I told you, I saw the Indians and listened to their complaints and Keating kept interrupting and saying but you forgot to mention this or that.*

P: *I think we ought to get moving on him; he is 71 years old.*

K: *Yes, but he would do us a lot of damage now. We should wait until things quiet down.*

P: *Two or three months and then I think we ought to do it.*

*K: I will make it clear with the Indians that there isn't going to be awar.*

(Ref: Document 108, Foreign Relations, 1969-1976, Vol XI, South Asia Crisis, 1971.)

**28 JULY 1971**

**Farland,<sup>2</sup> Kissinger, Nixon—**  
**("Mr President I hate to tell you but....")**

*Farland said: "There is another side to this picture, and I can say with complete candour that if we push Yahya to the point where he reacts, the reaction will be such that the entire subcontinent will be ... I mean he'll fight." He anticipated that conflict between India and Pakistan would draw in China as well.*

Nixon asked: "What do you think our position should be?" Farland responded: "I think we are doing what we should." He went on to paint a stark picture of prospects for the subcontinent. Hindus and Muslims had been at each other's throats for centuries and are likely to remain so.

Nixon interjected: "Miserable damn place."

Nixon asked for Farland's assessment of the "terrible stories" being circulated by the Indians about the horrors endured by the refugees at the hands of the Pakistani Army. Farland responded that the Indians were "past masters at propaganda."

Nixon then turned to Farland and said: "You are convinced that Yahya will fight." Farland responded: "Oh, he will," Nixon said: "He will commit suicide." Kissinger agreed that Yahya would fight: "Just as Lincoln would have fought." Farland added: "The possibility of defeat is a minor consideration as opposed to their sense of national unity."

Farland said that Yahya had told him that "his intelligence had pinpointed 29 refugee camps in India where guerrillas were being trained". "I hate to tell you this, Mr President, but the guerrilla threat is growing by leaps and bounds. They are averaging 18 Pakistanis a day now, they are averaging two bridges a day, killing that many." He added that the situation was exacerbated by the fact that refugees were prohibited from coming back to East Pakistan.

Nixon said that his problems in dealing with the situation in East Pakistan were magnified by the Department of State bureaucracy. "We are having a hell of a time keeping the State Department bureaucracies hitched on this thing." The

*Department's South Asia specialists were, in Nixon's view, "pro-Indian". Farland noted the political fallout that had resulted in the United States from the issue made about Pakistani brutality by the Consul General in Dacca, and by the head of USIS. Both officers had been transferred out of the area and Farland indicated that he was trying to prevent any further negative reporting on the situation in East Pakistan.*

It seemed Farland was by now clear which side his bread was buttered.

*(Ref: Document 109, Foreign Relations, 1969-1976, Vol XI, South Asia Crisis, 1971.)*

### **US reaction to China invasion**

*Dr Kissinger had made clear to the Indian Ambassador Jha (29 July 71) that the United States Government would consider any Chinese invasion of India in response to any Indian action in the Bangla Desh context as entirely different from the Chinese invasion in 1962, and that the USG would provide no support to India, either military or political, in that event.*

*....."this was causing considerable concern at the highest levels of the Government of India".*

*(Ref: Document 110, Foreign Relations, 1969-1976, Vol XI, South Asia Crisis, 1971.)*

### **What Would an Enemy of Pakistan do?**

*Mr Kissinger: "What would an enemy do to Pakistan? We are already cutting off military and economic aid to them. The President has said repeatedly that we should lean toward Pakistan, but every proposal that is made goes directly counter to these instructions. There are undoubtedly some things Pakistan must do, particularly to stop the refugee flow. They ought to do something to make the refugees come back or make India explain why the refugees are not coming back".*

*(Ref: Document 111, Foreign Relations, 1969-1976, Vol XI, South Asia Crisis, 1971.)*

### **Political Accommodation is a 'Short Hand Expression'**

*Mr Williams: "Political accommodation" is a shorthand expression. What is more important is some effective administration. Traditionally, in this part of the world, that means a civilian administration. The ability to mount an effective relief effort depends on how much of the civil administration is left intact."*

*Mr Kissinger: "Are we to tell the Pakistanis that unless they install a civilian administration we will let the famine develop?"...What do we mean by "political accommodation? "India considers political accommodation as splitting off East Pakistan from West Pakistan (but)... If there is another great outflow of refugees, the domestic problem in India may become unmanageable.... Your idea would be to go to Yahya with the whole program. If you do, he'll say "I'll do everything but the political steps The right direction to them (India) is the Indian direction. What is the right direction?*

*"...In general, of course, I'm in favour of representative government and we should urge Yahya to restore an increasing degree of participation by the people of East Pakistan. But the clock is running in India faster than the clock on political accommodation. We are determined to avoid war. If it is necessary to squeeze India, we will. There will be no war if we have any pressure available. The inevitable eventual outcome of all this is an autonomous East Pakistan. Over any two or three year period, 75,000 Punjabi cannot govern 75 million Bengalis. West Pakistan needs more time for the sort of accommodation that will be required than they do to meet the urgent problem of the refugees.*

*...Maury Williams is all right, but that idiot Van Hollen drives me crazy...."*

*(Ref: Documents 111 and 112, Foreign Relations, 1969-1976, Vol XI, South Asia Crisis, 1971.)*

## SITUATION—AUGUST 1971

During the month of August India continued to feel that its 'house was on fire'; and that in spite of that, the US continued to move at a snail's pace, often only marking time.

It was complained by the State Department and the White House that arms supply to Pakistan was enmeshed in a series of categories, clauses and sub clauses of such detail and complexity that even when it was to be officially declared that the tap had run dry, a trickle if not a stream still continued, with no one getting the wiser unless time and effort for emptying the contents of each and every bag lying in the godowns were at hand. There were arms for which

licenses had already been issued (by the State Department or the Defence Department,) and others where the processes were ongoing. There were arms whose sales had been cleared and paid for but lay in a variety of godowns awaiting shipments. There were yet other categories of arms which were being lifted directly from the private civilian manufacturers by Pakistan. There were others which were lying at ports, delivery already taken. There were others being directly lifted from defence depots by the Pakistani procurement mission in the US. Now who could keep a track of all this or ensure the categories would not be mixed up?

*Nixon and Kissinger discussed (the arms supply issue).... Kissinger said that they, by which he meant Indians and critics of Pakistan in the Congress, were asking for an embargo on arms and economic assistance to Pakistan. "The extreme people want to cut off everything" he said, and concluded "on relief we have a fighting chance but arms itself is hopeless." In considering how to work around pressure for an embargo on arms shipments to Pakistan, Nixon asked about future export licenses. Kissinger's advice was: "Fudge it;" indicate that no licenses were being authorized "at this time." Nixon concluded: " We will evaluate as it goes along. We will have to take the heat on this."*

(Ref: Document 113, Foreign Relations, 1969-1976, Vol XI, South Asia Crisis, 1971.)

## SITUATION IN AUGUST 1971

### **August: Indo-USSR Friendship Treaty Signed**

It was under these circumstances, and with the realisation that notwithstanding all the platitudes by the US leadership regarding the problems of political settlement in East Pakistan and slowing down the flood of refugees, no concrete action was visible on the ground. On the contrary, the ground situation continued to become decidedly worse.

It was in this background that the USSR-India (twenty year) Friendship Treaty was signed, to the relief of most Indians, of varying political denominations. It was widely welcomed as a quid pro quo, in the face of the US policies and Pakistan's obduracy, though it was clarified that this 'Treaty' had been in preparatory form for the past six years or so.

The clauses of the treaty catered for the two contracting parties to indulge in

'immediate mutual consultations' in the event of either's 'security interests being threatened' and thereafter to do whatever was best feasible to assist the affected side. It also catered for increased armed assistance on easy and acceptable terms including the supply of modern tanks, submarines and aircraft.

The treaty helped to introduce a new factor in an already complexed equation of Indo-Pak relationships. If China would not sit idly by in the event of Indo-Pak hostilities, would the USSR let India be victimised?

Significantly, as a reaction to the Treaty, Kissinger would tell Ambassador Jha:

*"It seemed a pity for the United States and India, which have no conflicting interests, to quarrel over a problem whose solution was preordained by history. The Ambassador asked Mr Kissinger what he meant. Mr Kissinger said that it seemed to him that over a historical period, East Bengal would be gaining autonomy even without Indian intervention. "We, in turn", he continued "had no interest in the subcontinent except to see a strong and developing India and an independent Pakistan. Indeed, there was a difference in our approach to India and in our approach to Pakistan. India was a potential world power; Pakistan would always be a regional power. For all these reasons, the problem would sort itself out if we separated the issue of relief from that of refugees and the issue of refugees from that of political accommodation."*

(Ref: Document 117, Foreign Relations, 1969-1976, Vol XI, South Asia Crisis, 1971.)

### **Mujibur Rehman's Trial**

Indian Ambassador Jha wrote to President Nixon on 11 August 1971:

*"The Government and people of India as well as our Press and Parliament are greatly perturbed by the reported statement of President Yahya Khan that he is going to start a secret military trial of Mujibur Rahman, without affording him any foreign, legal assistance. We apprehend that this so-called trial will be used only as a publicity to execute Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. This will aggravate the situation in East Bengal and will create a serious situation in India because of the strong feelings of our people and all political parties. Hence our grave anxiety. We appeal to you to exercise your influence with President Yahya Khan*

*to take a realistic view in the larger interest of the peace and stability of this region ".*

This led to a Senior Review Group meeting on the same day.

(Ref: Document 119, *Foreign Relations, 1969-1976, Vol XI, South Asia Crisis, 1971.*)

### **Senior Review Group Meeting: 11 August 1971**

President Nixon said:

*"The interests of the US would be "very much jeopardized" by any development that could break into open conflict. "We will have to do anything—anything—to avoid war."...We are deeply concerned about the suffering in East Pakistan and about the refugees in India. We must increase our effort on that front...Indian Ambassador Jha had been "bullyragging me" about the great statements the French and British had made with regard to the Pakistani situation. He had told the Ambassador not to talk about what they had said but to look at what they had done..."*

*... "Now let me be very blunt." He had been going to India since 1953. Every ambassador who goes to India falls in love with India. Some have the same experience in Pakistan—though not as many because the Pakistanis are a different breed. The Pakistanis are straightforward—and sometimes extremely stupid. The Indians are more devious, sometimes so smart that we fall for their line.*

*He "holds no brief" for what President Yahya has done. The US "must not—cannot—allow" India to use the refugees as a pretext for breaking up Pakistan. The President said with a great deal of emphasis that he is "convinced" that that is what India wants to do. That is what he might want to do if he were in New Delhi.... The USSR has "this little deal" with India.... Some think that the Russians want to punish the Pakistanis for their relationship with China. In his view, the Russians are looking at this situation as they looked at the Middle East before the June war in 1967. The danger is that they may unleash forces there which no one can control.*

*The problem is that if the Indians "romp around in East Pakistan" or send guerrillas, the Pakistanis may well go to war even though they feel that would be suicidal." He then concluded: In summary, publicly our position is that (1) we will go all out to help the refugees and to help people in East Pakistan; (2) there*

*must not be a war because war would help no one; (3) we will not publicly exacerbate the political situation."*

(Ref: Document 121, Foreign Relations, 1969-1976, Vol XI, South Asia Crisis, 1971.)

### **Keating Cautions State**

*On August 10 Ambassador Keating had sent a telegram from New Delhi pointing out that relations between the United States and India had sunk to a "poisonous" level. He argued that the United States should begin to take the steps necessary to reverse the general Indian perception of a US preference for "politically authoritarian, inherently fragile, third-rate Pakistan over democratic, relatively stable, regionally dominant India."*

(Ref: Document 121, Foreign Relations, 1969-1976, Vol XI, South Asia Crisis, 1971.)

### **Washington Special Actions Group Meeting 17 August 1971**

*Kissinger: "We have an overall interest in preventing hostilities. We do not want to be forced to chose between 800m Chinese and 600m Indians and Bengalis. We don't want India in the Soviet camp, even though the Indians may be deliberately driving themselves there through the creation of a phony crisis." (126 )*

*Helms: "In that part of the world (India-Pak) one still has the problem of passions outrunning good judgement."*

*Irwin:<sup>3</sup> "...possibility that Indians will stir up trouble"*

*Admiral Moorer:<sup>4</sup> "...Pakistanis are outnumbered 4 to 1. They certainly are not going to attack. (...but...emotion...refugee problem)"*

*Helms: "I think US policy has been just right on this occasion. We are urging the Indians not to attack, we are taking action to prevent famine, we are getting UN engaged after hostilities start, not much we can do except in coop with USSR and China."*

(Ref: Document 126, Foreign Relations, 1969-1976, Vol XI, South Asia Crisis, 1971.)

This was largely self congratulatory, but indicative that the US officials were trying to be fair-and square; but did not care to see or periodically review if the going-and results were in accordance with their basic policy tenets applicable to this area.

### **Memo: Kissinger to Nixon: 18 August 1971**

*"Yahya Khan committed to preventing Bengali independence, (since this is...over a period of time) a futile possibility, issue is how to get through the transitional period without a blow up.*

*In East Pakistan serious insurgency movement now underway in the countryside; beginning to penetrate major cities; fed by Indian logistics, training and some arms, but basically reflects a strong Bengali will to resist West Pakistanis. This in turn provokes army response which stimulates further refugee flow.*

*Refugee flow to India continues now 50,000 per day. Indians before March preferred a united Pakistan when they thought Bengalis may play a dominant role, but now they judge this is no longer possible would like to see an indep BD earliest."*

(Ref: Document 127, Foreign Relations, 1969-1976, Vol XI, South Asia Crisis, 1971.)

### **SITUATION IN SEPTEMBER 1971**

#### **Arms Supply to Pakistan**

*Yahya was sending a personal emissary to Washington to get additional arms, Major General Inam-ul Haq, Director General of Defense Procurement in Pakistan's Ministry of Defense as his embassy to Washington to get additional arms. On September 3, Kissinger sent a special channel telegram to Farland instructing him to make certain General Haq understood that he should contact Kissinger "personally" to obtain an accurate appraisal of President Nixon's thinking with respect to arms shipments... "stoppage of economic aid to Pakistan could be averted if the arms flow were shut off"...Sisco, "confidentially and unofficially " "suggested that both governments sit together*

*secretly as friends to look at what remained in the pipeline with a view to "announcing" its final close."*

(Ref: Document 138, Foreign Relations, 1969-1976, Vol XI, South Asia Crisis, 1971.)

## Aid to India

*Washington, September 3, 1971*

*SUBJECT: Cut-Off of Aid to India*

*The Washington Special Action Group meeting on August 17, 1971 agreed on the need to prepare a study of a possible cutoff in economic assistance to India setting out the specific steps which might be taken.*

(Ref: Document 140, Foreign Relations, 1969-1976, Vol XI, South Asia Crisis, 1971.)

## Maurice J. William's<sup>5</sup> Trip to Pakistan

*'On the basis of his experiences, Williams has some specific recommendations for future action. He feels that refugees and relief in both India and Pakistan are integral parts of the same problem...'*

*Specifically, Williams suggests that:*

*"We urge on Yahya a public declaration of protection for all minorities and that he back up the new Bengali Governor, Dr A.M. Malik, in measures to reduce the emotions against the remaining Hindus. We parallel our approach to Pakistan on relief needs and administration with similar discussions in India ...we would (a) encourage the Indians to help exempt the movement of relief supplies within East Pakistan from insurgent attack; (b) seek Indian recognition that intensification of the insurgency only produces more refugees; (c) seek help in obtaining a 60-day "dampening" of insurgent activity to permit a cooling off of anti-Hindu passions in East Pakistan and improve the atmosphere for possible negotiations between Pakistani and "Bangla Desh" representatives; and (d) seek acceptance of UN observers statement in East Pakistan having the freedom to cross into India on valid refugee business..."*

(Ref: Document 141, Foreign Relations, 1969-1976, Vol XI, South Asia Crisis, 1971.)

## Indian Opinion Bitterly Critical of US Postures

Keating's reports to State that the US-India relations have plummeted to an all time low. Even lifelong friends of the US have now become openly and bitterly critical. Letters in the media, editorials, views of opinion makers—all reinforce this unhappy and unsavoury trend.

*"Themes have become all too familiar: (i) desire to create South Asia power balance causes U.S. to "equate" Indian and Pakistan; (ii) U.S. at worst assisting Yahya to crush democracy (eleven professors of Rajasthan University), at best "silent spectator to genocide" (high school teacher in Bihar); (iii) U.S. "arming" of Pakistan and warming of Sino-U.S. relations has driven isolated India further into arms of USSR, which may radicalize Indian political process (e.g., leader in history Osmania University, businessman in Kerala, agriculturist in Punjab); (iv) irony of U.S. providing "arms" to Pakistan and assisting refugees who are victims; (v) U.S. gains nothing from its policy in present crisis; sample comment: "What is it America stands to gain by keeping alive the flame of torture in the subcontinent?"; (vi) some writers profess continued friendship for American people, but contrast administration unfavorably with "land of Washington, Lincoln and Kennedy".*

*(U.S.) "short-term national objectives being pursued in utter disregard of values cherished by civilized society." (Hindustan Times July 8). "American Government...could not but be expected to support venture of death and destruction by Pakistan. " (Times of India September 2). U.S. was increasingly being picturised as "strong secondary villain".*

Opinion polls indicated dramatic decline during the past year of US prestige in India.

Indian Army commander in chief characterised US actions as 'stupid'.

(Ref: Document 151, Foreign Relations, 1969-1976, Vol XI, South Asia Crisis,

1971.)

## SITUATION IN OCTOBER 1971

### Discussion Between Secretary William R Rogers and Indian Foreign Minister Swaran Singh

New York, 2 October 1971

Swaran Singh said that the US had contacts with Bangladesh. It had greater influence; it should try to bring about a dialogue... Sisco emphasised the importance of getting a dialogue started and urged Indians not to insist that Mujib be a participant....

*...Swaran Singh said that an average of 33,000 refugees were crossing from East Pakistan into India every day, exacerbating an already grave situation. He stated that humanitarian efforts to deal with the problem were only a palliative and emphasized that a political settlement was essential.*

(Ref: Document 156, *Foreign Relations, 1969-1976, Vol XI, South Asia Crisis, 1971.*)

### Refugees vs Guerillas

Washington, 7 October 1971 (Analytical summary by NSC)

*"The Indians, for example, flatly refuse to assume any responsibility for the Bengali insurgents and insist that the root of the problem is in East Pakistan. The Pakistanis claim that they are not harrassing the Hindus in East Pakistan. In both cases, the gap between their words and actions is great but it is very difficult to bridge. Meanwhile, the security situation in East Pakistan is continuing to deteriorate and the refugee flow continues."*

(Ref: Document 157, *Foreign Relations, 1969-1976, Vol XI, South Asia Crisis,*

1971.)

## Possible Chinese Actions

**"China will give some support to Pakistan. They might:**

- Give additional military assistance—this action is all but certain.
- Raise the level of tensions on the Sino-Indian border short of provoking incidents—this is highly probable.
- Provoke border incidents in Ladakh or the North East Frontier Agency (NEFA)—this also is highly likely.
- Limited invasion of India in Kashmir or NEFA. This is considered unlikely.
- Step up clandestine support of insurgents—this is likely.
- Invasion on several fronts—this is also considered unlikely given traditional Chinese military caution and the improved Indo -Soviet relationship."

(Ref: Document 158, Foreign Relations, 1969-1976, Vol XI, South Asia Crisis, 1971.)

## CIA Intelligence Report—7 October 1971

*'India and Pakistan continue to make military preparations. Their moves still seem primarily defensive. However, In the west, each army has about 200,000 men near the border. These units are in a high state of readiness. In Pakistan, many have moved to forward positions. India has two infantry divisions and an armoured division earmarked for the western front, although all three are still stationed hundreds of miles from the frontier. The armoured division has been alerted for movement, but it still appears to be in central India. If India were about to attack, these units almost certainly would move to the front, but it would take them about a week to get there.'*

*The Pakistanis also have two infantry divisions and an armoured division in rear areas. They might hold the armoured division in place, about 100 miles from the border, but would bring up the other two if they expected war in a matter of days. In the east, the Indians have over 100,000 troops, while the Pakistanis have 70,000 in East Pakistan.*

*War seems most likely to come, as it did in 1965, from a series of miscalculations, but we cannot rule out a deliberate decision by one side or the other. Mrs Gandhi could still decide to invade East Pakistan to end the refugee influx. The total has passed nine million, with 30,000 more arriving every day.*

*Dr Kissinger: Do you believe that? Do you think nine million is an accurate figure?*

*Mr Helms: Well, it may not be accurate, but even if it's only seven million, it is still a lot of refugees, with still more coming and practically none returning.*

*Senior Pakistani officials are convinced that Yahya will launch a pre-emptive attack in the next few weeks. Yahya himself has given the British the impression that he is considering such action...'*

(Ref: Document 159, *Foreign Relations, 1969-1976, Vol XI, South Asia Crisis, 1971.*)

### **Kissinger Speak**

*Dr Kissinger: When I was in India recently I formed the opinion that if the Indians were prepared to accept slow evolution in Pakistan, we could work effectively with them, and they would eventually get most of what they want. But they keep lumping all these things together; the refugee problem, independence for Bangladesh, Pakistani forces on their borders. In their convoluted minds they really believe they can give Pakistan a powerful blow from which it won't recover and solve everything at once. If they would cooperate with us we could work with them on 90% of their problems, like releasing Mujibur or attaining some degree of autonomy for Bangla Desh, and these steps would lead eventually to their getting it all.*

*... When I was in India in 1962, they told me how they were going to squeeze the Pakistanis along the front. They were so clever they got*

*themselves into a war.*

*....Yahya is a slow learner. He is very deliberate, but if you force him to make a decision, his Moslem instinct (!) may assert itself, and perhaps he will start taking rapid action.*

(Ref: Document 159, *Foreign Relations, 1969-1976, Vol XI, South Asia Crisis, 1971.*)

("The only reason for time is that everything doesn't happen at once."—Albert Einstein)

### **Yahya's Letter to Nixon: 8 October**

This is a gist of the above cited letter:

*"Persistent intervention in my country's internal affairs by India, its refusal to resolve the humanitarian problem of the displaced persons with the help and assistance of the United Nations as originally proposed by Dr Kissinger during his talks with me last July, later formally proposed by U Thant, and promptly accepted by us, and the increasing violations of Pakistan's borders by the Indian Armed Forces, have created a warlike situation between Pakistan and India. Despite assurances of restraining influence on India, the Indo-Soviet Treaty seems to have further emboldened India in her aggressive and bellicose designs against Pakistan."*

(Ref: Document 161, *Foreign Relations, 1969-1976, Vol XI, South Asia Crisis, 1971.*)

## **SITUATION IN NOVEMBER 1971**

### **Mrs Gandhi Tours World Capitals Including US—Meets Nixon**

It would be reasonable to surmise that contingency planning for the worst case scenario had begun early in India. Perhaps as early as immediately after the 25

March army crackdown in East Pakistan. A large scale operation in East Pakistan with its broken delta terrain could not have been undertaken without thorough preparation. For example, the going there was marshy, and heavy armour would sink, hence only light armour would do. There would be need to coordinate army operations with the navy and the airforce. The weather would also play a major role. Monsoons would set in mid-May and last until September end by when vast areas would have turned into lakes. Hence, military operations could not commence before that, and given another month or two and early winter would set in leading to the closure of some of the major passes on the border between India and China making large scale Chinese incursions that were much more difficult, and costly. A legitimate Indian game plan would, therefore, have been to effect a swift and well prepared strike in East Pakistan earliest in November-December, or so, while fighting a holding action in the West.

This would be the worst case scenario. In the interregnum, the GOI would do all in their power to hope for and canvass a negotiated political settlement in Pakistan and a cessation to the recurring and progressively enhancing problem of refugee generation. In the meantime GOI tried to canvass for support towards an understanding of India's problems in world capitals and by the world media. It additionally tried by all means under its command to ensure that it was in no way branded as hotheaded or an aggressor on any account. Tours by the Indian foreign minister and the prime minister to the world capitals was a means adopted to serve this end.

US assurances to China of checkmating USSR if China came to Pak assistance in a showdown with India in view Indo-USSR treaty.

### **Indira Gandhi meets Nixon at White House: 4 November 1971**

*The President Nixon (sic) asked Mrs Gandhi to present her views in detail on the situation in South Asia. In initiating this discussion, the President emphasized:*

- *The U.S. has no illusions with respect to the realities of the situation.*
- *The initiation of hostilities between India and Pakistan would be unacceptable from every perspective.*
- *For this reason, U.S. policy toward Pakistan has been shaped by the imperative to retain influence with the Government of Pakistan.*
- *In this regard our military assistance program has been retained in a most limited fashion to enable us to continue a dialogue with that government. The U.S. has and will continue to discourage military actions by the*

*Government of Pakistan.*

- *The situation demands the continuation of U.S. aid to relieve the plight of the nine to ten million refugees on both sides of the border. This is an enormous task which requires the concentrated efforts of all the parties. The U.S. objective is to be as helpful as possible without interjecting itself into the internal affairs of the parties.*

*The President then outlined the measures which the U.S. has taken to relieve the plight of refugees in India and in Pakistan.*

*...Prime Minister Gandhi stated that India was not being driven by anti-Pakistan motives. India had never wished the destruction of Pakistan or its permanent crippling. Above all, India sought the restoration of stability in the area and wanted to eliminate chaos at all costs. The Prime Minister recalled the genesis of the partitioning of the subcontinent and noted that the solution, largely dictated from abroad, had left the peoples of the area restive and dissatisfied. President Nixon agreed that the partitioning of the subcontinent had contributed to a permanent instability and noted that India had a larger Moslem population than Pakistan.*

*...Prime Minister Gandhi observed that many harbour the feeling that her father had let the country down by accepting the partitioning along the lines ultimately reached. Nevertheless, once the decision had been taken it had been accepted. But the partitioning generated a persistent "hate India" campaign which resulted in the conflicts of 1947 and 1965. Since that time, U.S. arms shipments to Pakistan had become a major point of concern to the Indian people.... Following India's independence, it was the leaders of the independence movement who formed India's government. On the other hand, in Pakistan it was the loyalist or pro-British factions which formed Pakistan's government. Pakistan proceeded to imprison or exile leaders of the independence movement. Baluchistan, as well as the provinces along the northwest frontier, have a strong desire for greater autonomy. There has been, therefore, a long history of separatist policies in Pakistan which heretofore has not necessarily been supported in India. Yahya was mistaken in trying to suppress Mujib.*

*India, on the other hand, has always reflected a degree of forbearance toward its own separatist elements. The pattern has been clear. West Pakistan has dealt with the Bengali people in a treacherous and deceitful way and has always relegated them to an inferior role. As the situation worsened, India attempted to ameliorate it by maintaining communication with all the parties.*

*The Prime Minister then turned to the great numbers of refugees who continue to stream across the border from East Pakistan*

*...President Nixon stated that this tragic situation demanded prompt and extensive humanitarian assistance and that for this reason he would continue to pressure the U.S. Congress to provide this assistance.*

*The Prime Minister noted that India had been accused of supporting guerrilla activity but that the situation was not that clear. She drew a parallel to the problems the U.S. Government had when Cuban refugees based in Florida launched forays against the Cuban mainland. The Prime Minister then cited the additional problems which had resulted from the severe cyclone. She noted that the situation was aggravated by the differences in religion and background between the refugees and the local population in India on which they were superimposed. This situation demanded the utmost efforts on the part of the Indian Government to prevent communal riots and bloodshed....*

*...President Nixon expressed sympathy with India's dilemma and noted that the U.S., and other nations as well, were greatly concerned with the problems posed by the flood of refugees from East Pakistan. He noted, however, that many of the tactics which were being employed by the Bangladesh (sic) were increasing the dilemma...*

*... The Prime Minister stated that President Yahya continued to speak of a Holy War. It may well be that the presence of Indian forces along Pakistan's frontier had deterred the initiation of military action by Pakistan thus far. This tense situation had influenced India toward making its treaty with the Soviet Union as a means of creating an additional deterrent. Stability in India was an important objective to the Soviet Union and, therefore, the Soviet Union had been pressing for a political solution...*

*...President Nixon asked the Prime Minister for her views on how a solution could be achieved. The Prime Minister stated that India's major concern was the impact of the situation on India itself.*

*President Nixon stated that U.S. efforts with respect to Pakistan were designed to alleviate the situation along constructive lines. The U.S. Government had always admired the people of India and shared its concerns. This had been clearly demonstrated. The restrictions we had placed on military assistance to East Pakistan had been undertaken with our relationships with India clearly in mind.*

*The Prime Minister replied that the crucial issue remained the future of Mujib who was a symbol of the imperative for autonomy...*

(Ref: Document 179, *Foreign Relations, 1969-1976, Vol XI, South Asia Crisis, 1971.*)

## In-house Post-mortem

*President Nixon and Henry Kissinger then met in the Oval Office of the White House on the morning of November 5, 1971, to discuss Nixon's conversation with Prime Minister Gandhi on the previous day. Kissinger's overall assessment was that "the Indians are bastards anyway. They are starting a war there.... To them East Pakistan is no longer the issue. Now, I found it very interesting how she carried on to you yesterday about West Pakistan." He felt, however, that Nixon had achieved his objective in the conversation: "While she was (expletive omitted by the authors), we got what we wanted too.... She will not be able to go home and say that the United States didn't give her a warm reception and therefore in despair she's got to go to war." Kissinger judged that Gandhi had been thwarted in her objective: "She would rather have had you give her a cool reception so that she could say that she was really put upon." Nixon agreed: "We really slobbered over the old Witch." Kissinger felt that on matters of substance, nothing of importance had been conceded: "You slobbered over her in things that did not matter, but in things that did matter, you didn't give her an inch."*

It would, thus, often seem that Kissinger was a genuine admirer of his president's immense talents and perhaps shared the vocabulary, too.

(Ref: Document 180, *Foreign Relations, 1969-1976, Vol XI, South Asia Crisis, 1971.*)

---

<sup>1</sup>Francis L. Kellogg, special assistant to the secretary of state for Refugee and Migration Affairs from January 1971; also chairman of the interagency committee on Pakistani Refugee Relief.

<sup>2</sup>Farland, Joseph S., ambassador to Pakistan, September 1969-April 1972

<sup>3</sup>Irwin, John N., II, under secretary of state, September 1970-July 1972; thereafter, deputy secretary of state.

<sup>4</sup>Moorer, Admiral Thomas H., USN, chief of naval operations until July 1970; thereafter chairman of the joint chiefs of staff.

<sup>5</sup>Williams, Maurice J., deputy administrator, Agency for International Development; chairman of Interdepartmental Working Group on East Pakistan Disaster Relief.

## **Chapter Three**

## The War Starts

**3 DECEMBER 1971**

MRS GANDHI SPOKE TO THE NATION LATE ON 3 DECEMBER 1971, charging that Pakistan had launched a full-scale attack against India earlier in the day, shortly after 5:30 p.m. She said that Pakistan's Air Force had struck at six Indian airfields in Kashmir, West Rajasthan and Punjab and that Pakistani artillery was shelling Indian positions at several locations along the border. India had no option now but to retaliate.

Pakistan answered the Indian charges in a note sent to the United States Embassy, in Islamabad, on 3 December. Pakistan's case was that the Indian Air Force had been carrying out aggressive reconnaissance over their territory for three-four days and had then launched an attack between 3:30 and 4 p.m. on 3 December, at several points along a front, stretching from Kashmir in the North to Rahimyar Khan in the South. Pakistan had to answer these attacks by bombarding Indian airfields.

*In Washington the question of responsibility for the initiation of warfare along the front between India and West Pakistan bore on policy considerations. Subsequently, the Central Intelligence Agency weighed the evidence on December 4 and concluded that it was not possible to determine with any certainty as to which side had initiated hostilities on December 3.*

(Ref: Document 215, Foreign Relations, 1969-1976, Vol XI, South Asia Crisis, 1971.)

10.45 a.m. (Washington time) Kissinger spoke to President Nixon over the telephone:

*K: Two matters I want to raise. It appears that West Pakistan has attacked because [their] situation in East collapsing. State believes and I agree that we should take it to the Security Council once actions are confirmed. If a major war [develops] without going to the Security Council it would be a confession of poverty.*

*P: Who will object?*

*K: India and the Soviet Union.*

*P: We have to cut off arms aid to India. We should have done it earlier. Allow India bias. I have decided it and there is no appeal. K: If they lose half of their country without fighting they will be destroyed. They may also be destroyed this way but they will go down fighting.*

*P: Pakistan thing makes your heart sick. For them to be done so by the Indians and after we have warned the b.....We have to cut off arms. Tell them that when India talked bout W. Pakistan attacking them it's like Russia claiming to be attacked by Finland.*

(Ref: Document 216, Foreign Relations, 1969-1976, Vol XI, South Asia Crisis, 1971.)

Soon after, Kissinger spoke to the Secretary of State Rogers telling him that Nixon was raising: "cain again and that he was getting hell. He wants it to tilt towards Pakistan." The conversation went as follows:

*K: Hello, Bill. I just talked to the President. He is agreeable to the Security Council thing as soon as we get all the facts in. He is raising cain again. I am getting hell. He wants it to tilt towards Pakistan.*

*R: I am in favour of that. I just hesitate putting out a statement condemning India. The facts we are speaking about are old hat as far as the news is concerned so a review statement to the press is like water off a duck's back.*

*K: I told the President that the argument the people will give is it's like Finland attacking Russia; that they were provoked into it and didn't have any choice. I've been catching unshirted hell every half-hour from the President who says we're not tough enough. He believes State*

*is pressing us to be tough and I'm resisting. He really doesn't believe we're carrying out his wishes. He wants to tilt toward Pakistan, and he believes that every briefing or statement is going the other way. (to Helms) What is happening?*

*Mr Helms: We know that the Pakistanis did attack the three airfields at Srinagar, Amritsar and Pathankot this morning. (12 hours gap between Washington and Indian time) It was first reported on the Indian radio, and now the Pak radio has reported it. The Pak radio also says India is attacking all along the border. Indian Foreign Secretary Kaul has told Ambassador Keating that is a "bloody lie." Dr Kissinger: How about in the West? Whoever attacked, there will be full-scale fighting.*

*Adm. Moorer: I'm surprised that the Paks attacked at such a low level. In 1965 they moved much more strongly. One of the airfields was a little Army field and the other two had practically no aircraft on them. The major fields are further south.... I have some questions about the Pakistani attack. It's not the kind you would think they would make.*

*Mr Irwin: Do you think it was symbolic? Or were they trying to provoke India?*

*Adm. Moorer: I'm not sure they attacked.*

*Dr Kissinger: If the Paks were attacking, they wouldn't have chosen that time... So one hypothesis is that the Indians attacked and the Paks did what they could before dark. Dick (Helms), what do you think?*

*Mr Helms: I have no better explanation.*

*Dr Kissinger: These aren't significant fields. That's a helluva way to start a war.*

*Adm. Moorer: One field had only 12 Helos and 16 Gnats.*

*Mr Packard: They had no fighter aircraft.*

*Mr Irwin: Would these aircraft be important if the Pakistanis were planning to attack in the morning?*

*Adm. Moorer: If they were going to attack in the morning, they would have hit the airfields in the morning. There was a field not too far away with 82 aircraft on it including 42 MIG-21s. They didn't go for them.*

*Dr Kissinger: That's a good point.*

*Mr Packard: They might have been heavily defended.*

*Adm. Moorer: I just don't think we have the information.*

*Mr Helms: I don't either. I think reports will be rolling in all day.*

(Ref: Documents 217 and 218, Foreign Relations, 1969-1976, Vol XI, South Asia Crisis, 1971.)

Farland, in a telegram communicated to the State Department that President Yahya Khan had informed him that, beginning about 1500 hours local time 3 December, a series of Indian Army incursions supported by air cover had occurred, at a number of points as far north as Kashmir and as far south as Rahimyar Khan. He said further that as a result of this activity, four Pakistan air force strikes had taken place upon airfields in the general area north and south of Lahore.

*Farland received the Foreign Ministry report by the end of the day. It described simultaneous attacks by the Indian Army between 3.30 and 4 p.m. at Sialkot, Chamb, in an area between the Jessar bridge and Lahore, and on the Rajasthan front opposite Rahim Yar Khan. Pakistan responded, according to the report, with air strikes at Srinagar, Avantipura, Pathankot, and Amritsar.*

(Ref: Document 220, Foreign Relations, 1969-1976, Vol XI, South Asia Crisis, 1971.)

A conversation between Nixon and Kissinger of 3 December went thus:

P: Any late developments?

K: It's more and more certain it's India attacking and not Pakistan...

P: Don't they know India—Everyone knows Pakistan (is) not attacking India.

K: Attacks took place at 5:45 when dusk was falling. Three commercial airfields.

P: They would do it at dawn to surprise them. K: And keep up attacks.

P: It's a tragedy the Indians are so treacherous. Her attitude...we are not doing this out of pique or mad at India. It puts them fully in hands of Russians.

K: It will drive Chinese to us.

P: Can Russians feed 400 million Indians?

*K: And Egypt and Cuba? They are getting overextended...*

*(Ref: Document 221, Foreign Relations, 1969-1976, Vol XI, South Asia Crisis, 1971.)*

## **Secret Agreements**

In a meeting at the White House a discussion took place about secret agreements or clauses of any such agreements that might have been made between America and India or Pakistan to assess which ones would be handy in the existing environment.

No secret agreements about military assistance to Pakistan was found except an 'Article I' of the Bilateral Agreement of 1959. There was, however, a secret air agreement with India of 1963 made in the wake of the 1962 war with China.

Dr Kissinger recalled that when he was in Pakistan in January 1962, they claimed there was a secret protocol or 'something'. It was surmised that it could have been during the Eisenhower years. Dr Kissinger thought it might have been during President Kennedy's tenure.

### **4 DECEMBER 1971**

Another message from Yahya Khan arrived through Farland appealing that his [Pakistan's] military forces were in desperate need of the US military supplies, with India having precipitated an all out war. However, should the Nixon administration find this to be an impossibility, Yahya Khan was, on his knees pleading, "for God's sake don't hinder or impede the delivery of equipment from friendly third countries."

Nixon wanted to help and Kissinger suggested the Iran route which was agreed upon.

*(Ref: Document 222, Foreign Relations, 1969-1976, Vol XI, South Asia Crisis, 1971.)*

Nixon and Kissinger exchanged light banter with each other acknowledging they had talked six times on the previous day and had already talked on six occasions that day. Now they discussed the Security Council goings on and how to squeeze India further:-

K: ...at meeting the Chinese jumped all over the Russians and Indians. When the Indians wanted to put on the agenda only the item of problems of East Pakistan, the Chinese said "No, let's call it problems of India." And that's all right if they all brawl with each other.

P: Good. Let the liberals choose now between China and India. That'll be very good.

K: ...but in six months the liberals are going to look like jerks because the Indian occupation of East Pakistan is going to make the Pakistani one look like child's play...

P: ...And you're examining every other possibility of how we can squeeze India right now?

K: That is right, Mr President.

K: Well, they (newspapers and periodicals) are trying to be pretty evenhanded. They're blaming India. They are blaming India for the military actions and then, of course, they are bleeding about the refugees. But it's beginning to tilt against India. Well, but we haven't got them (Indians) anyway, Mr President.

P: We've got their enmity anyway. That's what she's (Mrs Gandhi) shown in this goddamn thing, hasn't she?

K: I mean it isn't that we are losing an ally. They were the ones that made a treaty with the Russians. They are the ones that are now establishing the principle that force is the only method—the principal method for settling disputes, and it isn't that we're losing anything. In fact, if we do it the right way, we can still get them to come back to us, to get back in our good graces. The Russians aren't going to give them \$700 million in development money.... The President is dismayed by the use of Indian troops in Pakistan and said the American people would not understand. And that played very well, very strong ....

P: Now insofar as those actions are concerned, we haven't had any squeals from the Indians, have we?

K: No, no. See that's again where (the) State was wrong. The Indians have no interest in escalating this with us. Not a squeal. They will start squealing next week when the economic aid is cut off.

P: Good, well we'll have some fun with this yet. God, you know what would really be poetic justice here is if some way the Paks could really give the Indians a bloody nose for a couple of days. The fighting, any report on that?

*K: Well, the fighting—we got reports in East Pakistan that the Indians are surprised at the intensity of the Pakistan resistance. But of course they outnumber them there eight to one (With 100,000 Indian troops to 70,000 Pakistanis, by the US's own estimates as given by CIA?)*

*P: How about West Pakistan?*

*K: In West Pakistan the Indians don't seem to have gotten very far. They've been bombing Karachi and burning the oil installations.*

*P: Isn't that awful. That [is] terrible. The Indians are bombing Karachi?*

*K: Yes.*

*P: Oh, for Christ's sake, isn't that...and Rawalpindi I notice is on the list, too.*

*K: Yes. Well, of course, they've been playing a terrific game these last years. Every time one tank was shipped to Pakistan the Indians would carry on like maniacs, but they've been getting big shipments from the Soviet Union.*

*P:.... They're (Indians) in the business of being the aggressors—course they are the aggressors. I really feel—oh, I know all the arguments that well then we're choosing up sides, we're not neutral. Of course, we're not neutral. Neither are the Indians. They're always neutral against us.*

*P: It'll be very attractive also to the American people.*

*K: That's right.*

*P: They would like it. You say, "Look, we've given \$10 billion in aid. Now they are going forward with this aggression, we're cutting off all aid to them until they stop."*

(Ref: Document 223, *Foreign Relations, 1969-1976, Vol XI, South Asia Crisis, 1971.*)

An Washington Special Actions Group meeting was held in which the decisions taken included highlighting at the UN, the official Indian statement on the 'no-hold-barred' offensive and the comparable Pak statements. By 6 December the CIA was required to put up an hour-by-hour account of events along with appropriate conclusions. It was agreed to support the Japanese bid asking for convening of the Security Council.

*Dr Kissinger: Have the Indians said they are launching an all-out attack?*

*Mr Helms: They've said they have launched a "no holds barred" offensive on East Pakistan.*

*Dr Kissinger: Has Yahya Khan said anything of a comparable nature?*

*Mr Helms: He has said his army would push the invader back into his own territory and destroy him.*

*Dr Kissinger: Is that objectionable? Can the UN object to someone driving an enemy back? ...Everyone knows we will end up with Indian occupation of East Pakistan. It will be interesting to see how all those people who were so horrified at what the Paks were doing in East Pakistan react when the Indians take over there. Mr De Palma<sup>1</sup> Yahya Khan has been saying somethings too—the "final war" statement... (but this was not taken notice off).*

(Ref: Document 224, Foreign Relations, 1969-1976, Vol XI, South Asia Crisis, 1971.)

Helms mentioned that the Indian planes had hit two oil storage dumps in Karachi and a big blaze was seen.

On 4 December, at the United Nations Security Council Ambassador Bush<sup>2</sup> introduced a resolution that called for the cessation of hostilities and the withdrawal of armed forces by India and Pakistan from each other's territory.

*The CIA prepared a chronology and covering memorandum entitled, "India-Pakistan: Responsibility for Initiating Hostilities on 3 December 1971". The documents are undated, but the chronology ran through December 4, suggesting that they were prepared and submitted on December 5. The covering memorandum concluded that it was difficult to determine conclusively which country initiated hostilities, but the weight of evidence tended to support Indian claims that Pakistan struck first in the west with air strikes.*

(Ref: Document 224, Foreign Relations, 1969-1976, Vol XI, South Asia Crisis, 1971.)

At 12.15 p.m., on 4 December Nixon told Kissinger the main thing now was

to look after the public relations side of things. He confessed that the White House was weak in not getting full cooperation from the bureaucracy—an oft-repeated grouse of Nixon. He directed Kissinger to get, Scali turned loose on what we are doing—what we have done—and blame India. The "Libs" can say we brought this on by the arms support to Pakistan. That will be their argument. India will be doing "PR" to make Pakistan look like it caused it. Get the point? "Kissinger answered in the affirmative and mentioned that India was waging a full scale war on East Pakistan and would then be moving on to West Pakistan.

HAK: At the Security Council, the Indians and Soviets are going to delay long enough so a resolution cannot be passed. If it was, the Soviets would veto. UN will be impotent. So the Security Council is just a paper exercise—it will get the Post and Times off our backs. And the Libs will be happy that we turned it over to the UN.

RN: Say I want Scali<sup>3</sup> to blame India,

HAK: I'll get Scali.

(Ref: Document 225, *Foreign Relations, 1969-1976, Vol XI, South Asia Crisis, 1971.*)

## 5 DECEMBER 1971

Executive Secretary Eliot sent a memorandum to Kissinger attaching excerpts from security assurances provided to Pakistan by the United States. One such excerpt was from a 26 January 1962, letter from President Kennedy to President Ayub, reads as follows: "As a firm ally, Pakistan is entitled to the re-affirmation you have requested of the prior assurances given by the United States to Pakistan on the subject of aggression against Pakistan. My Government certainly stands by these assurances." On November 5, 1962, Ambassador McConaughy gave ] President Ayub an aide-memoire which offered the more explicit assurance that the United States would "come to Pakistan's assistance in the event of aggression from India against Pakistan."

(Ref: Document 218, *Foreign Relations, 1969-1976, Vol XI, South Asia Crisis, 1971.*)

## Letter From Indian Prime Minister Gandhi to President Nixon

"New Delhi, December 5, 1971.

Excellency,

The GOI has kept (you) informed of the tragic and intolerable ramifications of the events inside East Bengal or India since March 25 last... From time to time, we have been explaining the developing situation to you through our diplomatic representatives. The repressive, brutal and colonial policy followed by the Government of Pakistan in East Bengal culminated in genocide and massive violence since March 25, 1971. This, as you know, has resulted in an exodus of 10 million East Bengali nationals into India whose number is still increasing.

We have borne the burden of these events and have withstood the greatest pressure that any country could face in such circumstances. We have also acted with great restraint in face of continuous provocations from Pakistan.

Our hope that counsels of reason from the statesmen of the world might persuade President Yahya Khan to deal with the elected leaders of the people of East Bengal directly to achieve a political solution of the problem has been belied.

We have now received incontrovertible evidence of Pakistan's war-like intentions. On the afternoon of 3rd December 1971, the GOP ordered a massive attack on India across its western frontiers. I regret to inform Your Excellency that around 1730 hours (Indian Standard Time) on the 3rd of December, Pakistan launched a massive air and ground attack on our country all along the western border. Their aircraft bombed Srinagar, Amritsar, Pathankot, Uttarali, Ambala, Agra, Jodhpur and Avantipur. There has also been heavy shelling of the border cities and townships of Ambala, Ferozepur, Sulaimanki, Khemkaran, Poonch, Mehdipur and Jaiselmere. The attack against India was carefully organized and premeditated as is proved by the fact that the Pakistan army struck across the western borders of India stretching from Jaiselmere to Kashmir between 1500 hours and 1800 (I.S.T.). (So its not between Kashmir to Rahimyar Khan!)

I am writing to you at a moment of grave peril and danger to my country and my people. The success of the freedom movement in Bangla Desh has now become a war on India due to the adventurism of the Pakistan military machine. We are left with no other option but to put our country on a war footing.... We are a peace-loving people but we know that peace cannot last if we do not guard our democracy and our way of life. I should stress to Your Excellency that the

*people and the GOI are determined that this wanton and unprovoked aggression should be decisively and finally repelled once and for all; the whole of India stands united in this resolve and expects that the international community will appreciate our predicament and acknowledge the righteousness of our cause.... In this hour of danger we seek your understanding and urge you to persuade Pakistan to desist forthwith from the policy of wanton aggression and military adventurism which it has unfortunately embarked upon. May I request Your Excellency to exercise your undoubted influence with the Government of Pakistan to stop their aggressive activities against India and to deal immediately with the genesis of the problem of East Bengal which has caused so much trial and tribulations to the people not only of Pakistan but of the entire subcontinent.*

*Accept, Excellency, the assurances of my highest consideration, Indira Gandhi"*

(Ref: Document 226, *Foreign Relations, 1969-1976, Vol XI, South Asia Crisis, 1971.*)

### **A Revealing Bit of Conversation**

*R (Rogers): In the long run do we want to go all out and take the exact Chinese position or do we want to be somewhere in between. At the moment we are somewhere in between—between the Soviet Union and China?*

*K: Well, our present position is to try to be say two-thirds of the way towards China but not all the way but above all what we have here is a Soviet-Indian naked power play to dismember a country.*

(Ref: Document 227, *Foreign Relations, 1969-1976, Vol XI, South Asia Crisis, 1971.*)

Yet another telephone conversation between Nixon and Kissinger reflects the measure of their concern with the developments:

*P: And how does it play, it plays good?*

*K: On front page in the New York Times and Washington Post.*

*P: And what line did they take it?*

*K: That India is largely to blame for the outbreak of hostilities and it lists all the things the Indians have rejected. P: Good.*

*K: And it's just what you wanted.*

*P: It got across though that who's to blame?*

*K: Oh, yeah.*

*P: And heavily played?*

*K: And heavily played.*

Nixon asked Kissinger as to where they stood. Kissinger told him about the happenings at the UNSC—that a US sponsored resolution calling for a ceasefire followed up by withdrawal was put up but the Russians put in their own resolution which blamed everything on Pakistan and just called for political accommodation in East Pakistan. The UNSC proceedings ended up in favour of the US resolution with eleven to two votes but the Russians vetoed it. Nixon and Kissinger both expressed their delight that the Russians got such few votes but the problem now was how to get a resolution that the Russians could also go along with.

*K: If it's anti-Pakistan, the Chinese will veto it.*

*P: (Laughter) You know, this, Oh, Boy.*

*K: Right. Now ... the Russians this morning have launched a blistering attack on Pakistan and warned the Chinese against getting involved.*

*What we are seeing here is a Soviet-Indian power play to humiliate the Chinese and also somewhat us. P: Yeah, yeah.*

*Kissinger then pointed out that there was nothing much the US could do to directly change the situation on the ground. He admitted to opening the US to the charge of sacrificing the freindship with India but said in the same breath that there really "was no friendship left".*

Nixon then asked what suggestion the State Department had about the options. Kissinger told him that the State's suggestion "is always to release Mujibur Rehman", and that is in effect the Russian position. Nixon retorted that Pakistan would not do that. Kissinger opined that it was too late for that now since it had become outdated. He then returned to the standby villain, 'The Indians were determined, Mr President, they attacked at the earliest possible moment they could. There was a rainy season from May to the end of

September. Then they had to get their troops into position; then they had to train the Bengali. All this talk about Indian restraint that we heard all summer was complete poppycock. If we collapse now, I admit it's not a brilliant position, but if we collapse now, the Soviets won't respect us for it; the Chinese will despise us and the other countries will draw their conclusions.'

*P: Well, what about the British position and how they're playing it?*

*K: Well, they abstained.*

*P: They abstained on this?*

*K: Yeah.*

*P: That sort of figures doesn't it?*

*K: Yeah.*

*P: French?*

*K: They abstained.*

*P: Humph. The French abstained too, huh?*

*K: Yeah.*

*P: What do you think the real game is, there on the British and the French—afraid to make Russia mad, isn't that it?*

*K: That's right; they are trying to position themselves between us and the Russians.*

*P: Um-humm.*

*K: No, I am beginning to think one of the worst mistakes we made was to push Britain onto the Common Market.*

*P: Yeah, yeah.*

(Ref: Document 228, Foreign Relations, 1969-1976, Vol XI, South Asia Crisis, 1971.)

In the UN there was to be a resolution move by Argentina requiring both a ceasefire and a withdrawal but this was likely to be vetoed by the Soviets. Thereafter, a resolution for ceasefire alone was likely to be considered, but Kissinger felt that the US should abstain from it because it would leave half of Pakistan in Indian hands. This would leave the Chinese and the US with 'egg on their face', felt Kissinger:

*"The problem—I know it will always be put on the ground that we want to save the China trip but these people don't recognize that*

*"without a China trip, we wouldn't have had a Moscow trip"*

(Ref: Document 229, Foreign Relations, 1969-1976, Vol XI, South Asia Crisis, 1971.)

What seemed to hurt Nixon more than all else was the shere 'ungratefulness' of India over long years of American aid, despite 'which they had refused to become either a friendly supporter or a client state who'd sign on the dotted line always and every time. On the contrary—and this was most peeving—if the UN records were to be perused, the Indians had voted more often against the causes and resolutions the US chose to sponsor and espouse. A telephone conversation between Nixon and Kissinger on 5 December went thus:

*P: Now, I asked him what the hell we could do about the British, the French. He said nothing. So dammit, I think—well, the British I guess want to get along with India in the future... K: And in fact we ought to consider seriously getting Vorontsov in and telling him if the Russians continue this line, these talks on the Middle East and others just aren't going to be possible.*

*P: Yeah. Well, get him in. Why don't you send a letter from me to Brezhnev? .... The arguments from the New York Times and others will be "we will buy ourselves a century or decades of hatred and suspicion from the Indian people." Bullshit! What is [has] \$10 billion of foreign aid bought us?*

*K: Exactly.*

*P: But hatred and suspicion from the Indian people!*

*K: Exactly.*

*P: Tell me one friend we've got in India, do you know any?*

*K: Exactly.*

*P: How about putting it that way? Just as cold as that. Let's start getting some top anti-Indian propaganda out.*

(Ref: Document 230, Foreign Relations, 1969-1976, Vol XI, South Asia Crisis, 1971.)

Kissinger then summoned Russian ambassador Vorontsov and spoke to him complaining of Soviet behaviour. He told him that President Nixon could not

understand how the Soviet Union could believe that it was possible to work on the broad amelioration of 'our relationships while at the same time encouraging the Indian military aggression against Pakistan'. Kissinger explained that they were not against arriving at a political solution, but here a member country of the United Nations was being dismembered by the military forces of another member country which had close relationship with the Soviet Union. Vorontsov wanted to convey something about a political solution, since this was featured so prominently in Kosygin's letter. Kissinger replied that their attitude towards a political solution was that if there were a ceasefire and a withdrawal, the United States would be prepared to work immediately with the Soviet Union on ideas of a political solution.

## 6 DECEMBER 1971

### A Longer Day in Washington

The sixth of December was packed with activities as details of the war continued to unfold. The US intelligence had achieved a virtual coup in having accessed the gist of the top secret proceedings of the Indian Cabinet wherein the Indian prime minister Mrs Gandhi had addressed her Cabinet colleagues, at 11 p.m. taking them into confidence about the salient aspects of India's war aims and strategy. It was made out that this vital information had been passed on by an important Cabinet minister for a consideration. The damage that this would do to India would be enormous for the information provided became crucially pivotal in subsequently influencing and fashioning the course of unfolding events and of American policy substantially towards the subcontinent. This leak hurt India's interest grievously.

Sizing up the situation on the war front, it was reported that "The Indian forces are continuing their all out offensive into East Pakistan and heavier fighting is developing in the West where Pakistan seemed to be taking the initiative... In East Pakistan the Indian forces are making gradual progress on several fronts. They were pressing the outnumbered Pakistan forces on several strategic fronts and the Indian gains so far might be laying the basis for more dramatic successes in the near future. The Indian objective is to force the Pakistan troops to surrender in East Pakistan by the following week. The Indian strategy was to maintain an essentially defensive posture in the West until the battle was won in the East, but there were indications that Pakistan might be

preparing a major offensive thrust in Kashmir".

*...In the air war, India had apparently achieved complete air superiority in the East and was using its air force to support the ground offensive. The Indians continued to bomb and strafe military targets in major cities in both East and West Pakistan. Fuel storage tanks in the Dhaka and Chittagong areas of East Pakistan and in the West Pakistan part [port] of Karachi had been especially hard hit.*

*The navies of both countries were also active. The Indian Navy was blockading ports in both East and West Pakistan and claimed to have sunk two Pak destroyers and to have shelled the port of Karachi. India's aircraft carrier was operating against East Pakistan. The numerical superiority of India's fleet could give it a decided advantage in any future naval combat.*

*On the political front, Mrs Gandhi had announced India's longanticipated recognition of Bangla Desh as an independent nation the Paks responded by breaking diplomatic relations with India. The Swiss would look after Pakistan's interests in New Delhi.*

*The 5 December night meeting of the Security Council, on the Indo-Pak crisis underlined both the isolation of the Soviet/Indian position and the determination of the USSR to prevent any resolution not to its liking.... Soviet draft resolution (calling for an East Pakistan political settlement which would "inevitably result in a cessation of hostilities" and for Pakistan to cease acts of violence in East Pakistan which "led to the deterioration of the situation") was defeated; 2 in favor (USSR and Poland), 1 against (China) and 12 abstaining (including the U.S.)*

*Most speakers deplored the inability of the Council to act, with the British and the French lamenting the Council's proceeding to vote on resolutions which would fail. Following the vote the Italian representative tabled a resolution limited to a call for an immediate ceasefire as a first step. However, he was stopped from pressing the resolution to vote by a movement to adjourn until the afternoon of the 6th. This was supported by the USSR, U.S., UK and France which was accepted by the Council. There were ominous suggestions during the corridor consultations that the issue could be taken to the General Assembly if the Council proved unable to act.*

(Ref: Document 232, Foreign Relations, 1969-1976, Vol XI, South Asia Crisis, 1971.)

At a follow-up briefing by General Westmorland elaborating the military situation, it was mentioned that India had an advantage of three to one over Pakistan in aircraft. Pakistan were on the offensive in four areas. One was a brigade-size attack against Kashmir, where they made little progress. They met stiff resistance elsewhere.... The Indian government was trying for a rapid and successful conclusion of the fighting in East Pakistan. Indian Prime Minister Gandhi, had on 3 December, stated that Indian objective was to complete action within ten days and redeploy Indian troops to the borders with West Pakistan. If India should mount a full-scale attack, it was estimated that in conjunction with the Mukti-Bahini guerrillas they could take enough East Pakistan territory in 10 days to establish the rebel government. If their activity was no more than at present, however, it would allow the East Pakistani troops to withdraw to more easily defended positions and they might be able to hold out for at least a month. Extracts from the discussion make interesting reading:

*...Mr Froehlke asked if Kashmir was mostly populated by Moslems. Admiral Zumwalt<sup>4</sup> said yes. Annexation of Kashmir by Pakistan would make sense. However, at the time of the Partition the Maharajah was Hindu, so it went to India.*

*General Westmoreland: Wvidence suggests that the Pakistanis preempted in the West to relieve pressure on East Pakistan. ... Admiral Zumwalt... We do not know what the Pakistan/Communist China master strategy is in this situation. Nevertheless, the U.S. will take a lot of lumps. We have come out on the side of the Pakistanis. East Pakistan will go down and it will look like we are ineffective allies. The USSR will gain with the Indians. In the short term the military balance in the Indian Ocean area will go against us.*

*Packard commented: "One of the problems was what options does the U.S. have? The only way to prevent outbreak of war was to force the Pakistanis not to fight" then added: "We tried to get both sides to withdraw to avoid war. The Pakistanis agreed to do so, but the Indians did not...."*

*General Westmoreland noted that in his visit to India last year, he was "impressed with the Indian officers and their pro-U.S. attitude..." Mr Williams: "Remember you will have about a million and a half Urdu-speaking people in East Pakistan."*

*Mr Kissinger: Are you implying there will be a massacre? Wasn't it*

*reported to be the retreating Bangla Desh forces who were responsible for the earlier massacres? Mr Williams: Yes.*

*Mr Sisco: I see a serious blood-letting once they are satisfied the Pak Army is defeated.*

*Mr Johnson: What about the Bengalis in the West?*

*Mr Williams: There are 300,000 Bengalis in West Pakistan.*

*Mr MacDonald: We don't have many precedents for a mass evacuation, but there was a large population movement from north to south in Vietnam in 1954. We might brush off our history on this.*

*Mr Sisco: (to Gen. Westmoreland) Assuming the Indians take over, how do you think it will happen? Can you project their strategy? Gen.*

*Westmoreland: I think their primary thrust will be to cut off the port of Chittagong. This will virtually cut off any possibility of resupply. Then they will move to destroy the Pak regular forces, in cooperation with the Mukti Bahini. They will then be faced with the major job of restoring some order to the country. I think there will be a massacre—possibly the greatest in the twentieth century.*

*Mr Kissinger: Will the Indians withdraw their army once the Paks are disarmed?*

*Gen. Westmoreland: No, I think they will leave three or four divisions to work with the Mukti Bahini, and pull the remainder back to the West.*

*... Mr Kissinger: Will they permit Bangla Desh to establish itself with an army and a separate foreign policy?*

*Mr Sisco: I wouldn't exclude it. There is likely to be a continued Indian presence, however.*

*Mr Van Hollen: After the Indian Army has been in East Pakistan for two or three weeks, they may come to be accepted as a Hindu army of occupation.*

*Mr Kissinger: Do you think they will establish Bangla Desh in its present frontiers? Or will they settle the refugees along the border and then annex some territory?*

*Mr Van Hollen: They may question whether they should send the refugees back now to a Bangla Desh that is largely Muslim. Gen. Westmoreland: India will be facing a situation in the West that is not altogether advantageous to them. They have 265,000 men there now: 12 infantry divisions, 3 armoured divisions, 3 armoured brigades and*

*6 infantry brigades. The Paks have 200,000 men in 9 infantry divisions and 2 armored divisions.*

*... Mr Sisco: (to Gen. Westmoreland) What do you think their strategy in the West will be?*

*Gen. Westmoreland: In the West, I think the major Pak effort will be to the north—toward Kashmir and the Punjab. They would like to seize Kashmir; and we have a clandestine report that that is their intention. The Indian strategy will be to strike at Godra [sic] [Gadra] toward Hyderabad. If they can take Hyderabad, they will have cut the line of communication across the river to Karachi. I don't think the Indians plan to move to Karachi or even to Hyderabad. I think this is a diversion to try to get the Paks to bring back some of their reserves from the north.*

*Mr Williams: Bangla Desh will need all kinds of help.*

*Mr Johnson: They'll be an international basket case.*

*Dr Kissinger: But not necessarily our basket case.*

*Mr Sisco: Wait until you hear the humanitarian bleats in this country.*

*Mr Williams: They will have a tremendous problem of resettlement of the refugees.*

(Ref: Documents 234 and 235, Foreign Relations, 1969-1976, Vol XI, South Asia Crisis, 1971.)

On 6 December 1971, Nixon wrote a letter to Brezhnev in which he pointed out that whatever be the causes of the conflict, an objective fact was that the Soviets had aligned themselves with Indian policy to dismember the sovereign state of Pakistan. This only helps to aggravate an already grave situation. It would be wrong to think that military force could bring about a solution. Any solution so brought about was bound to be illusory and would further complicate the mutual relation between the US and the Soviet Union and adversely affect a whole range of issues; in particular the spirit in which they had decided the following May to meet in Moscow (for the Summit) and were on the threshold of a new and hopeful era in their relations. All of this requires of both of us to exercise restraint and the most urgent action to end conflict and restore the territorial integrity in the Subcontinent.

*About the letter, "Kissinger observed that "we haven't really hit them."*

*He added: "Every time we have been tough with them they have backed off."*

(Ref: Document 236, *Foreign Relations, 1969-1976, Vol XI, South Asia Crisis, 1971.*)

An NSC meeting was then held. Nixon mentioned that he had written to both Mrs Gandhi and General Yahya Khan regarding pulling back of their respective forces. While Yahya Khan had readily agreed, Mrs Gandhi had refused.

*Nixon then mentioned how \$10 billions given to India as aid over a period had had no influence with the Indian government. And in hindsight it may be the very fact of cutting off military assistance to Pakistan which encouraged the Indians to attack since the military balance was badly out of kilter. It was obvious that the Indians were not looking for ways to stay out of conflict but rather to get into one. Now we saw in the west Pakistanis attacking Indians. Charging the Pakistanis with this action was like accusing Finland of attacking the Soviet Union. Pakistan would have been insane to want war since it was at such a strategic disadvantage. And yet we saw the Soviets providing unlimited assistance to the Government of India.... Whenever there was trouble abroad some inferred that it was the United States' fault. Local hatreds had prevented a peaceful solution....*

*If the balance shifted, war resulted. In this sense U.S. policies failed in South Asia....*

*Dr Kissinger stated that the failure was the result of American policies over the past seven years.*

*The conflict was obviously the result of a carefully worked out plan designed by the Indians some time ago.*

*Some had inferred that the Indians were practicing restraint but it was obvious now that they had moved as early as they were able to. The rains were over; the passes from China were closed with snow; the Bangladesh (guerillas) had now been trained and the Indians had moved their own forces. All was completed as Prime Minister Gandhi travelled abroad.*

*Nixon noted that the alienation with Pakistan started when the U.S.*

*broke its word to President Ayub (presumably when at the instance of his foreign minister Bhutto he had drifted towards China). The Indians had long wanted to hurt Pakistan. Their interests involved Kashmir more than East Pakistan. It was now time for the U.S. to reconsider very carefully the military assistance problem. It was a myth to assume that the elimination of military assistance would eliminate war. This was nonsense. The issue depended on the local conditions. In this instance the balance should have been retained. During the Eisenhower Administration the U.S. helped to maintain Pakistan's strength but later when the Pakistanis started to play with the Chinese we cut off our contacts with them.'*

*Director Helms then gave the intelligence briefing. He had a report which covered Madam Gandhi's strategy, as delivered to her Cabinet at 11:00 p.m. on December 3, 1971. The Indians planned to move in the west but to primarily adopt a defensive posture and to prevent the Pakistanis from cutting off Kashmir. The Indians had no initial objective in West Pakistan but sought a quick victory in East Pakistan which would enable them to transfer their forces to the north. India assumed that the Chinese would remain quiescent and hoped to achieve the collapse of East Pakistan in one week to ten days. The objectives in the west were to destroy Pakistan's armour and in the east to totally liberate the area.*

*... Helms completed his briefing by noting that India's recognition of Bangladesh provided a justification for intervention in East Pakistan. He used a map to illustrate the progress of Indian and Mukti Bahini forces in East Pakistan and indicated that major efforts were being made to secure the roads and railroads leading into East Pakistan from China. Pressure on the Pakistani forces in East Pakistan was increasing from all sides, but there had not been a significant breakthrough. Nonetheless, Helms felt that 10 days was a conservative estimate of how long it would be before the Pakistani forces in East Pakistan would be forced to surrender. Pakistan's response was anticipated to be an assault upon India's positions in Kashmir. The conflict in the west was still in the opening stages with India fighting a holding action...*

(Ref: Document 237, Foreign Relations, 1969-1976, Vol XI, South Asia Crisis, 1971.)

*The tenor of the discussion dealt heavily with how to 'doll up' and lay before the bar of international opinion India's culpability in the crisis. There was extensive discussion of how best to take advantage of the forum of the United Nations, where the issue was at the point of shifting from the Security Council to the General Assembly, institution which was not constrained by the threat of a Soviet veto.*

(Ref: Document 238, Foreign Relations, 1969-1976, Vol XI, South Asia Crisis, 1971.)

On the same day, President Nixon and Henry Kissinger met in the Oval Office of the White House at 6.14 p.m, for another discussion of this confrontation between India and Pakistan. Both were focused upon the Soviet Union as key to a settlement of the crisis...

*...Nixon was also concerned that he had not 'made his position clear enough when he met Prime Minister Gandhi in November' he was 'too easy on the "goddamn woman ". He felt that she had determined upon a course of action before their meeting and had "suckered" him in their talks...'*

*....In retrospect, Kissinger felt that a much tougher line had been called for and the staff recommendation should have been to "brutalize her privately."*

(Note: Much as the authors have endeavoured to moderate the language of the participants in this short account, however, of totally censoring many excerpts there is no option but to let the language remain as in the original conversation.)

(Ref: Document 239, Foreign Relations, 1969-1976, Vol XI, South Asia Crisis, 1971.)

Nixon then declared that she would have to "pay for her deeds". He saw China as offering the best prospect of putting pressure on India. He considered telling them that some movement on their part toward the Indian border could be very significant, "Damn it, I am convinced that if the Chinese start to move the

Indians will be petrified...."

*... Nixon referred to the intelligence report they had received on India's war plans. He said he wanted "to put it out to the press".... "put into the hands of a columnist who will print the whole thing." He felt that the report "will make her bad...." Kissinger then predicted that the Democratic Party would make India a campaign issue, to which Nixon responded: "They'll probably say we're losing India forever. All right, who is going to care about losing India forever?"*

*Kissinger agreed that it was not something to be concerned about. "Hell, if we could reestablish relations with Communist China we can always get the Indians back whenever we want to later—a year or two from now."*

(Ref: Document 239, *Foreign Relations, 1969-1976, Vol XI, South Asia Crisis, 1971.*)

On the same day (6 December) a communication was received from the Soviet leadership asking for an immediate ceasefire between Pakistan and India and a demand that the Government of Pakistan immediately recognise the will of the East Pakistani population as expressed in the December 1970 elections. The note emphasised that for a prolonged period now the Soviets had been drawing the attention of the USG to the dangerous situation developing in the "Hindostan peninsula", as a result of the actions of the Pakistani government against the population of East Pakistan.

(Ref: Document 241, *Foreign Relations, 1969-1976, Vol XI, South Asia Crisis, 1971.*)

*Jz ha Presents Mrs Gandhi's letter to President Nixon*

[Indian Ambassador Jha along with Rasgotra<sup>5</sup> called on secretary of state, on 6 December, to present a copy of the letter from Prime Minister Gandhi to President Nixon.]

*Jha began by saying that GOI was "greatly shocked and surprised" at*

*USG reaction in last few days. Jha added that he was personally shocked. Past experience indicated that Pak strategy would be to use irregular troops to infiltrate and then follow this up with attacks by regular forces. From GOI's point of view presence of Indian troops on border was to better safeguard Indian positions, as withdrawal would have exposed India to this risk. Jha said that one week ago just before he left New Delhi, a high level decision was taken instructing Indian armed forces not to do anything on the western border, not even to respond to minor acts of irritation. Although in substance GOI had not agreed with US withdrawal proposal, it was in general harmony with US thinking that its important western areas are not to be embroiled. Jha noted that PM's letter described Pakistani attack on Indian airstrips. For GOI to be blamed for having precipitated conflict was very unfair.*

*Secretary William P. Rogers responded by saying that the USG position was as set out by Ambassador Bush in his speech to the Security Council.... "While we sympathize with India's position and understood its plight, war was [the] least desirable of all possibilities. We had tried to find an alternative. Rightly or wrongly we felt that India desired an independent Bangladesh and believed that the only solution was dismemberment of Pakistan. We could not subscribe to that in terms of use of force. We think events have justified our assessment. It is now important that there be a ceasefire and withdrawal and that then we work out a political solution. We recognize a political solution is essential but India seems to be saying that only armed force can bring it about. We are very unhappy about this; President is personally unhappy. We feel very strongly about it..."*

*... Rasgotra noted that UN resolutions so far "did not touch on the basic issues at all." Secretary said we recognized "there must be political solution. GOI position seems to be that there must first be a political solution and then a ceasefire. Our position is the reverse. First step is to stop fighting (and withdraw troops) and then to have political solution."*

*Jha noted that India had waited for 8 months but there had been no encouraging progress toward political settlement. India only wanted conditions in which refugees could return...*

*... Secretary Rogers then said: "The President is very disappointed*

*since as a result of his conference with Mrs Gandhi. He thought that resort to force could be avoided. In our judgment even if India succeeded in getting what it wanted situation would be worse than before."*

(Ref: Document 245, Foreign Relations, 1969-1976, Vol XI, South Asia Crisis, 1971.)

### 7 DECEMBER 1971

*A message from Yahya Khan to Nixon of this date mentions that the military situation in East Pakistan had deteriorated sharply during the last 24 hours due to shortage of artillery and air support. 'Should India succeed in its objective the loss of East Pakistan with a population of 70 million people dominated by Russia will also be a threat to the security of South Asia. It will bring under Soviet domination the region of Assam, Burma, Thailand and Malaysia.'*

*He mentioned that the far-reaching consequences of "such a development to the future of Asia need no comment."*

*"In such a critical hour for Pakistan", he requested President Nixon to do "whatever he could to relieve the pressure from their borders. There was need for urgent action to issue a stern warning to Russia and India to stop aggression against Pakistan. There was also urgent need for material assistance from the United States of America, directly or indirectly, as His Excellency might consider appropriate to meet the situation."*

(Ref: Document 242, Foreign Relations, 1969-1976, Vol XI, South Asia Crisis, 1971.)

*A reply to Yahya Khan's message was sent by Nixon through Farland the same day, with promises that he (Yahya) had the "understanding and support of the United States at that critical hour". Strong efforts would be underway to bring peace to the subcontinent, effect the withdrawal of Indian forces and "restore the territorial integrity of Pakistan, and see to it that political, not military, solutions are found for regional problems."*

*"... Soviet Union had been called to use its influence in New Delhi to restore the territorial integrity of Pakistan and to halt military action. People's Republic of China was being kept fully informed about the various measures we are*

*taking in your support" and "we have made clear that we welcome the strong efforts it was making in your behalf".*

*... Nixon mentioned that his thoughts were with Yahya Khan in this difficult hour for your nation.*

*...(Farland sent a backchannel message to Kissinger on December 8, in which he reported that President Yahya Khan was visibly touched by President Nixon's letter and expressed his appreciation. In the course of their conversation, Yahya Khan described the situation in East Pakistan as "beyond hope," and told Farland that he anticipated that the death total among Biharis and supporters of his government in East Pakistan could run into the millions. )*

*(Ref: Document 243, Foreign Relations, 1969-1976, Vol XI, South Asia Crisis, 1971.)*

Secretary of Commerce Maurice Stans reported to President Nixon at the White House on his eleven-day trip to the Soviet Union. Having talked to Kosygin, he was upbeat about the prospects for improved relations between USA and the USSR.

*... Kissinger told Nixon that if need be he could "make in a very low key way an enormously damning case against the Indians." In sketching his indictment of India, Kissinger said: "I can show a real pattern of Indian deceit. For example on November 19, I saw the Indian Ambassador. On November 15, I saw the Pakistan Foreign Secretary. And I told him we needed a maximum program because it would be very difficult to prevent hostilities from breaking out. He said he would let me know after he came back on the 22<sup>nd</sup>. And on the 19<sup>th</sup> I told this to the Indian Ambassador. He said let me know as soon as you know when that will be. I said around the 28<sup>th</sup>. On the 22<sup>nd</sup> they attacked."*

*(Ref: Document 244, Foreign Relations, 1969-1976, Vol XI, South Asia Crisis, 1971.)*

## **An Intelligence Coup and Its Aftermath**

Central Intelligence Agency—7 December 71  
(source of information likely 3-4 December)

## **SUBJECT**

[Indian Prime Minister Mrs Indira Gandhi's Briefing (less than one line of source text not declassified) on the Indo Pakistani War.]

*.... On 6 December 1971 Indian Prime Minister Indira Gandhi [1 line of source text not declassified] told [less than 1 line of source text not declassified] "that India is doing quite well on the diplomatic front. The Soviet Union's support in the United Nations, while expected, shows the value of the Indo-Soviet friendship treaty." Mrs Gandhi also commented that she is pleased with the stand taken by France and Great Britain in the Security Council.*

*As far as China is concerned, said the Prime Minister, she had expected it to take a more balanced view, even though Chinese support to Pakistan in the United Nations was a foregone conclusion. The Prime Minister stated that she hopes the Chinese do not intervene physically in the North; she noted, however, that the Soviets have warned her that the Chinese are still able to "rattle the sword" in Ladakh and Chumbi areas. If they should do so, she said, the Soviets have promised to counterbalance any such action.*

*The Prime Minister said that the United States might attempt to bring the ceasefire issue before the General Assembly after another Soviet veto. She stated that India would not accept the advice of the General Assembly, however, until:*

- *Bangladesh is liberated;*
- *The southern area of Azad Kashmir is liberated; [less than 1 line of source text not declassified] comment: This encompasses the area west of the 1965 ceasefire line between Chhamb and Punch.);*
- *Pakistani armoured and air force strengths are destroyed so that Pakistan will never again be in a position to plan another invasion of India.*

*The Prime Minister continued by saying that it is a pity that, in spite of India's efforts, the United States has not changed its policy toward the subcontinent. The new nation of Bangladesh is emerging; West Pakistan will be reduced to the size of other small West Asian countries. This balance of forces will be favorable to India, she said, but the United States is unable to appreciate the changes which are taking place; however, the Prime Minister added that there is still time for the United States to alter its policy toward the subcontinent.*

*The Prime Minister stated that she expects other socialist countries to recognize Bangladesh after some time has elapsed. The immediate concern of India, however, is to finish the war quickly.*

*Mrs. Gandhi concluded her briefing by reiterating India's war objectives:*

- *The quick liberation of Bangladesh,*
- *The incorporation into India of the southern part of Azad Kashmir for strategic rather than territorial reasons, (because India has no desire to occupy any West Pakistan territory);*
- *and, finally, To destroy Pakistani military striking power so that it never attempts to challenge India in the future".*

*(Ref: Document 246, Foreign Relations, 1969-1976, Vol XI, South Asia Crisis, 1971.)*

**8 DECEMBER 1971**

### **"Memorandum From Kissinger to President Nixon"**

*UN General Assembly approved a resolution on the Indo-Pak war, essentially the same as that vetoed in the Security Council by the Soviets. The vote was 104 in favour (including the U.S.), 11 against (Soviet bloc minus Romania, plus Bhutan and India) and 10 abstentions, most notable of which were the UK, France and Denmark. The resolution specifically calls for a ceasefire, withdrawal of troops, creation of necessary conditions for a voluntary return of refugees and urges protection of civilians in the area.*

*On this date the US Consul General in Dhaka commented (on the military situation) that the "noose is obviously getting tighter."*

*...Paks have mounted two substantial drives into Kashmir and seem to have made some progress. There is fighting also to the south on the Punjab plain, but the results so far are inconclusive. The Indians have, however, penetrated at least 15 miles into West Pakistan in the direction of Karachi.*

*... CIA has reviewed China's military position along the Indian border and concludes that the Chinese are not militarily prepared for major and sustained involvement in the Indo-Pak war. It seems clear that involvement on the scale of the 1962 invasion of India is probably beyond China's present capabilities. China does, however, retain the option of a smaller scale effort, ranging from overt troop movements and publicized preparations to aggressive patrolling and harassment of Indian border outposts on a limited diversionary attack. In this connection, it is also worth noting that Mrs. Gandhi recently told her cabinet that if the Chinese "rattled the sword" the Soviets have promised to*

"counterbalance" any such action.

*On the political front, Yahya Khan moved ahead yesterday with his plan to establish a civilian coalition government. It was announced that Nurul Amin, a Bengali friendly to Yahya Khan, will be Prime Minister and that Z.A. Bhutto has been appointed Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister.*

(Ref: Document 247, *Foreign Relations, 1969-1976, Vol XI, South Asia Crisis, 1971.*)

### **"Minutes of Washington Special Actions Group Meeting"**

It was decided that:

*CIA would assess the international implications of the situation; Defence would assess Pakistan's military prospects in Kashmir; State would prepare a paper on our military supply options; State would revise the cable to King Hussein, telling him we are reviewing the matter of his providing aircraft.*

(Ref: Document 248, *Foreign Relations, 1969-1976, Vol XI, South Asia Crisis, 1971.*)

### **The Discussion**

*Dr Kissinger: The southern part of Azad Kashmir—is that the part the Paks took in 1947? Mr Helms: Yes.*

*... Mr Sisco: (to Helms) How long do you think the Paks can hold out in the East?*

*Mr Helms: Forty-eight hours—if it were not for the rivers, it would be over by now.*

*.... Dr Kissinger: We have one major problem—what stance should we take toward a possible debacle in West Pakistan as well as in the East?*

*.... Helms reported that Indian forces had broken through Pakistani lines in the Comilla area of East Pakistan, and the situation was deteriorating for Pakistani forces throughout East Pakistan. In the west Pakistan claimed to have captured Poonch on the Kashmir ceasefire line, but admitted to sustaining heavy casualties in Kashmir and in a tank battle*

*on the Sind-Rajasthan frontier. According to a CIA report (Document 246) Prime Minister Gandhi told her Cabinet on December 6 that before accepting a UN call for a ceasefire there were three objectives that would have to be achieved: to guarantee the establishment of Bangladesh; to liberate the southern part of Azad Kashmir; and to destroy Pakistan's armour and air forces. .... Helms had noted in his briefing that Pakistani forces in East Pakistan were under such heavy pressure from the Indian offensive that they had begun to destroy their records. ... Mr Williams: The recommendation of the World Bank was that the total cost of the refugee relief should be compensated to India to protect the Indian development program. The total was \$700 million, of which the US quota would have been \$250 million. This was not done, however. Instead, we made \$90 million in direct commodity contributions—PL-480 food, other commodities, and some to U.S. voluntary agencies....*

*Mr Johnson: A very small amount of U.S. dollars have flowed to the Indian economy—about \$5 or \$6 million. .... Mr Kissinger: We have orders to put nothing in the budget for India. Let's now turn to the key issue. If India turns on West Pakistan, takes Azad Kashmir and smashes the Pak air and tank forces, a number of things seem inevitable. Should we, in full conscience, allow the liberation of the same disintegrating forces in West Pakistan as in the East? Baluchistan and other comparable issues are bound to come to the fore, as Mrs. Gandhi indicated to the President and as she told a Columbia University seminar in New York, I understand. Pakistan would be left defenceless and West Pakistan would be turned into a vassal state... Mr Helms: In this connection, Mrs. Gandhi told her cabinet that she had expected a more balanced view from the Chinese. She expressed the hope that the Chinese would not intervene physically in the north, but said that the Soviets had said the Chinese would be able to "rattle the sword." She also said that the Soviets have promised to counterbalance any such action.*

*Dr Kissinger: If we hadn't cut off arms to Pakistan, this problem wouldn't exist. Mr Packard: That's right.*

*Dr Kissinger: We didn't analyze what the real danger was at the time we took that step—we all failed there. If we had understood the implications—I was wrong too—we were all wrong. What is the judgment of this group? We have a country, supported and equipped by the Soviet Union,*

*turning one-half of another country into a satellite state and the other half into an impotent vassal. Leaving aside any American interest in the subcontinent, what conclusions will other countries draw from this in their dealings with the Soviets? Dick (Helms), would you do an analysis of this? Mr Helms: Don't we have some obligation under CENTO? Mr Johnson: No legal obligation.*

*...Mr Van Hollen: Singh said the Indians had no territorial ambitions—we could pick him up on that.*

*Dr Kissinger: If they succeed in destroying the Pakistan Army, they don't need any territorial ambitions.*

*... Mr Williams: In 1965, the Paks closed our base at Peshawar and for all practical purposes left CENTO.*

*... Dr Kissinger: We're not trying to be all that evenhanded. The President has told all of you what he wants—do any of you have any doubts as to what he wants? He doesn't want to be completely evenhanded. He's trying to get across to the Indians that they are running a major risk in their relations with the US. If every time we do something to the Indians, we have to do the same thing to Pakistan, we will be participating in the rape of Pakistan, given the difference in their strengths.*

*Continuing Dr Kissinger said: Why should we do anything to ease India's state of mind? If India is mad, they won't get any less mad if we don't do some of these things. Mrs Gandhi is a cold-blooded, tough customer. She won't become a Soviet satellite out of pique."*

(Ref: Document 248, Foreign Relations, 1969-1976, Vol XI, South Asia Crisis, 1971.)

### **The Meeting with Shah in Tehran**

*On instructions from Washington, a senior Embassy official met the Shah in Tehran on December 8, 1971, to discuss the possibility of Iranian military support for Pakistan. The Shah stated that he had informed the Pakistani Ambassador in Tehran that, in light of the treaty of friendship signed by India and the Soviet Union, he could not send Iranian aircraft and pilots to Pakistan. He was not prepared to risk a confrontation with the Soviet Union.*

*The Shah proposed an alternative way to provide support to the hard-*

*pressed Pakistani Air Force. He suggested that the United States urge King Hussein to send Jordanian F-104 fighters to Pakistan. The Shah in turn would send two squadrons of Iranian aircraft to Jordan.*

*(Ref: Document 250, Foreign Relations, 1969-1976, Vol XI, South Asia Crisis, 1971.)*

### **An Extraordinary Meeting: 8 December 1971**

President Nixon, Attorney General Mitchell, and National Security Assistant Kissinger met in the Old Executive Office Building on the afternoon of 8 December 1971, for an extended discussion of the crisis in South Asia....

*Turning to the situation in East Pakistan, Kissinger warned that "the Indian plan is now clear. They are going to move their forces from East Pakistan to the west. They will then smash the Pakistan land forces and air forces." He added that India planned to "annex the part of Kashmir that is in Pakistan." [Azad Kashmir]. Kissinger went on to attribute to the Gandhi government the goal of Balkanizing West Pakistan into units such as Baluchistan and the Northwest Frontier Province. West Pakistan would become a state akin to Afghanistan and East Pakistan would equate with Bhutan. "All of this would have been achieved by Soviet support, Soviet arms, and Indian military force." Kissinger warned that "the impact of this on many countries threatened by the Soviet Union" would be serious. He pointed in particular to the potential impact upon the Middle East. If the crisis resulted in "the complete dismemberment of Pakistan," Kissinger worried that China might conclude that the United States was "just too weak" to have prevented the humiliation of an ally. Kissinger felt that the Chinese would then look to other options "to break their encirclement."*

*"So I think this, unfortunately, has turned into a big watershed."*

*"Nixon said that he had given Prime Minister Gandhi a warning during his dinner in Washington with her: "I told her that any war would be very, very unacceptable." Kissinger observed that any such warning obviously fell on deaf ears: "She was determined to go." [Into East Pakistan]*

*... Nixon asked: "Now what do we do?" Kissinger responded: "We have two choices. We have got to convince the Indians now, we've got to scare them off from an attack on West Pakistan as much as we possibly can. And therefore, we've got to get another tough warning to the Russians." Kissinger noted that in doing so "you are risking the summit. On the other hand, the summit may not be*

*worth a damn if they lose—if they kick you around." He attributed the military imbalance on the subcontinent in good part to President Johnson "to his great discredit." Kissinger faulted the bureaucracy. "You promised Yahya Khan on your first visit to send some arms." The difficulty, he said, was to get the bureaucracy to fulfill the promise. "We didn't know there would be a war in '71, but it took a year to get your promise to Yahya Khan worked out."*

*...Kissinger said: "I think we're in trouble." He went on to say: "If we did this, we could give a note to the Chinese and say if you are ever going to move, this is the time." Nixon agreed: "All right, that's what we'll do." Mitchell observed: "All they have to do is put their forces on the border." Kissinger noted the danger of a corresponding move by the Soviet Union to support India and said: "I must warn you, Mr President, if our bluff is called, we'll be in trouble."*

*Nixon said they had to "cold-bloodedly make the decision." Kissinger added: "We've got to make it within 36 hours." Nixon said that he did not want another meeting: "No more goddamn meetings to decide this. "...We can't do this without the Chinese helping us." He added: "As I look at this thing, the Chinese have got to move to that damn border. The Indians have got to get a little scared." He instructed Kissinger to get a message to that effect to the Chinese.*

Summarising the decisions they were considering, Kissinger said:

*"We should get a note to the Chinese, we should move the carrier to the Bay of Bengal." Nixon interjected: "I agree."... Kissinger said that he was more optimistic than he had been earlier that China would respond positively to a suggestion regarding a coordinated move...*

(Ref: Document 251, Foreign Relations, 1969-1976, Vol XI, South Asia Crisis, 1971.)

Nixon and Kissinger concluded their discussion of the crisis on the Indian subcontinent on 8 December 1971, with a telephone conversation that began at 8.03 p.m. They began by discussing the summit scheduled for Moscow in May in light of the crisis. Their view was that the Soviet's failure to restrain India imperiled the summit. Nixon said: "Maybe we really have to put it to the Russians and say that we feel that under the circumstances we have to cancel the summit.....

*.... Kissinger also pointed to the threat to West Pakistan:  
"At this stage, we have to prevent an Indian attack on West Pakistan." Nixon*

*agreed. Kissinger continued: "We have to maintain the position of withdrawal from all of Pakistan." He concluded that if the United States held firm in its approach to India and the Soviet Union, the administration would achieve its overall goals, even if it failed to prevent India from dismembering Pakistan: "If they maintain their respect for us even if you lose, we still will come out all right." For Kissinger, it was a question of preserving credibility and honour. By introducing United States military power into the equation, in the form of a carrier and other units from the Seventh Fleet, the United States was seeking to prevent "a Soviet stooge, supported by Soviet arms" from overrunning an ally.*

*.... Nixon returned to his conviction that China could exercise a decisive restraining influence on India.*

*"The Chinese thing I still think is a card in the hole there." "I tell you a movement of even some Chinese toward that border could scare those goddamn Indians to death."*

(Ref: Document 252, Foreign Relations, 1969-1976, Vol XI, South Asia Crisis, 1971.)

### **A Look Through the Soviet Prism**

#### **Letter from Brezhnev to President Nixon Received 8 December 1971**

*"Dear Mr President:*

*The events that had led to the armed conflict between Pakistan and India are well known to you as well as to us. Striving to forestall their deterioration we were in mutual contact and kept informed of the actions of each other. Yet, the military confrontation still could not have been averted.*

*... Soviet Union from the very outset took the position aimed at a peaceful solution of the questions at issue, and did everything necessary in this respect, trying in every way to convince both sides of this. We stated to President Yahya Khan and the Pakistani Government that the only way to proceed is the way of political settlement, and that a political settlement requires political means. Also, we repeatedly laid emphasis on the essence of the problem to be solved. And that essence is that as a result of the reprisal by the Pakistani authorities against those political forces in East Pakistan*

*which were given full confidence by the people in the December 1970 elections and as a result of cruel repressions against the broad masses of the East Pakistani population, India was flooded with a stream of refugees unprecedented in history—some 10 million people. This influx of many millions of those ill fated and deprived is a misfortune not only for themselves but also for India. That would be a misfortune for any country, even the richest one. But it was clear all along that it would be impossible to get the refugees back to their native hearths without a political settlement in East Pakistan itself through negotiations between the Pakistani Government and the East Pakistani leaders who were elected by the people, and elected at that by universal vote which the Pakistani authorities themselves termed as completely free. That is why we advised President Yahya Khan to speedily take that path. We figured that the United States, too, would act in the same direction, and told you about it. We persistently expressed to both Pakistan and India our view about the necessity of a speediest political solution of the problem at issue. Unfortunately, President Yahya Khan and his Government did not take our advice. We are still puzzled as to the reason why the Pakistani leadership did not want to follow the way of political settlement—the way of negotiations. But the fact remains that they preferred to conduct the affairs in such a way as to make the guns speak and blood shed. Nobody can tell how many people have already perished—and still many more may die.....*

*....In general I believe that a favourable element, from the viewpoint of prospects in the struggle for ending the conflict, is that there is no confrontation here of our two powers. And this being the case, we have all the more ground for parallel actions this proposal of ours, i.e. to solve together and simultaneously both questions—of ceasefire and of immediate resumption of negotiations between the Government of Pakistan and the East Pakistani leaders concerning a political settlement in East Pakistan. We feel that this proposal provides a way out for all, including Pakistan. On the other hand, all would lose—and Pakistan maybe even more than others—on the way of continuing the war and rejecting a political settlement... ...The crux of the whole matter, as we are convinced, is the question of how to exert due influence upon President Yahya Khan and his Government. We*

*continue to do that. But here, it seems, you have more possibilities.  
Sincerely, L. Brezhnev"*

(Ref: Document 253, *Foreign Relations, 1969-1976, Vol XI, South Asia Crisis, 1971.*)

### **Kissinger's Take on Soviet Letter**

*Kissinger briefed Nixon on Brezhnev's letter less than 2 hours after he received it: "They're proposing a ceasefire and a political negotiation between Islamabad and the Awami League." These he characterized as "old proposals" and added: "It is a very conciliatory letter, which is in itself unacceptable." He proposed a response: "If this negotiation is within the framework of the united Pakistan, with maximum autonomy for the east, we are willing to discuss it with them. That will separate them to some extent from the Indians. And secondly, it will get us a ceasefire in the west, which we've got to have if the West Pakistanis aren't to be smashed."*

(Ref: Document 253, *Foreign Relations, 1969-1976, Vol XI, South Asia Crisis, 1971.*)

**9 DECEMBER 1971**

### **"Memorandum From Kissinger to President Nixon"**

*Indian forces in East Pakistan are now making steady progress on several fronts and are at one point 22 miles from Dhaka. The most immediate threat is from the east, but the Indians must now make a major river crossing if their thrust is to continue. The main port of Chittagong to the southeast has been cut off from Dhaka,...*

*... How long Pakistani resistance will continue will depend on whether the Pakistani forces give up or are captured as their posts are taken or are able to fall back in relatively good order to a few urban centers like Dhaka for a last-ditch defence. President Yahya Khan in a conversation with Ambassador Farland yesterday seemed resigned that he could not do anything more to help*

*his troops in the east, but he said that they will fight "to the last Muslim." There have been some reports of desertions by members of army and police units, but there have been no indications yet that discipline is collapsing or that large numbers are surrendering.*

*... the Defence Secretary in New Delhi yesterday put forth a "personal suggestion " that India could be more effective in protecting the minorities in East Pakistan, including West Pakistani soldiers, if the Pakistani Government were prepared to arrange an orderly Bangladesh takeover.*

*... Thant<sup>6</sup> asked both the Indians and Paks to agree to a 24-hour stand-down to permit repair of runways for evacuation of foreigners (from Dakha).*

*Both India and Pakistan are preparing for another round of debate at the UN Indian Foreign Minister Singh is on his way to New York as is Bhutto, the new Pakistani Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister...*

*... On the political front, Yahya Khan has confirmed to Ambassador Farland that he has speeded up and intends to carry out his "blueprint" for transferring power to a civilian government, although it has been announced that Yahya Khan will remain President. Apparently Nuril Amin, the Bengali who has been appointed Prime Minister.*

*(Ref: Document 254, Foreign Relations, 1969-1976, Vol XI, South Asia Crisis, 1971.)*

### **Dissuading India**

#### **"Minutes of Washington Special Actions Group Meeting: 9 December 1971"**

*It was agreed that:*

*The JCS would prepare urgently a plan for deployment of a carrier task force for evacuation of Americans from East Pakistan, and the agencies should comment on the advisability of such a move by this afternoon;*

*...Mr Kissinger mentioned the President is astonished that American officials could appear to agree with the Indian interpretation that, since they have split off only some 60% of the country and did not actually annex the territory, this demonstrates that they are essentially peacefully inclined. This is not our position "and he does not want the Indians to be left under any misapprehension in this regard. He wants this corrected today."*

*...Helms reported that the defence being mounted by Pakistani forces in East Pakistan was crumbling. Indian forces suffered heavy casualties during the early stages of the fighting, but they were breaking through outmanned Pakistani positions. There were no indications that Pakistani forces were surrendering in large numbers or that discipline had broken down, but the CIA assessment was that Pakistani forces in East Pakistan would have a hard time regrouping. Indian officials were calling for a surrender of those forces to prevent further bloodshed.*

*... Mr Helms: In the last few hours we have a report from Karachi that the oil tanks there have been hit again, in the 12<sup>th</sup> or 13<sup>th</sup> air raid, and that six or eight of them are burning. An ESSO representative has indicated that this means the loss of 50% of Karachi's oil reserves, which amounts to over 80% of the POL for all of Pakistan. He estimates that they are left with a two-weeks' supply, possibly less at the rate at which POL is now being consumed. ... Adm. Moorer: In East Pakistan, in the absence of a ceasefire, it's just a matter of time until the Pakistan Army will be essentially ineffective. In West Pakistan, the Paks are slightly superior in numbers, (they have about 90-100,000 men), and they are trying to occupy enough of Kashmir to give them a bargaining chip if and when there is a ceasefire.....*

*... When East Pakistan is gone, the Indians will transfer their divisions to West—possibly four of the six divisions... ....*

*Mr Kissinger: So we have to prevent an Indian onslaught on West Pakistan, since the outcome will be the same as in East Pakistan. The Indians will then control the area to Bhutan in the East and Nepal in the West [Kissinger probably meant Afghanistan]. Mr Irwin: The CIA paper (*Implications of an Indian Victory Over Pakistan, December 9*) predicts the possible acceleration of the breakup tendencies in West Pakistan—possibly into as many as four separate states.*

*.... Mr Williams: It sounds as though POL is the critical element, if they have lost 50% of 80% of the supplies for all of Pakistan. Doesn't this mean that their planes and tanks will come to a halt in about three weeks?*

*Mr Helms: The Indians have already hit the reserves at Rawalpindi.*

*Mr Williams: The Indian objective is to take out the Pak tanks and planes. If they run out of POL and can't move, they'll be sitting ducks.*

*Mr Johnson: What is the possibility of trucking POL from Tehran? Adm.*

*Moorer: There is one road. We have one report that indicates that Chinese trucks are coming in but we don't know what they are carrying. Iran is the*

*logical source of POL. I talked to the Turkish Chief of Staff at NATO and asked him how much assistance he thought Iran was prepared to give to Pakistan. He said he thought the Shah wanted to be helpful, but had one eye cocked on Iraq. In the end, he didn't believe the Shah would give significant assistance.*

*Mr Kissinger: Are we agreed that we should do our best to prevent an Indian attack on West Pakistan? That this is our chief objective?*

*Mr Irwin: The question is how to do it. To what degree would this require involvement of the United States.*

*Mr Kissinger: We are involved, no matter how often our press spokesmen say we are not. The question is the degree of our involvement.*

*Mr Johnson: If the fighting in the West could be brought to a stop now, it would be to the advantage of the Paks. The Paks have already accepted the UN ceasefire resolution.*

*Mr Kissinger: Including withdrawal?*

*Mr Johnson: Yes; the Indians have not accepted it. A withdrawal by both sides to the previous boundaries is clearly in Pakistan's interest. ....*

*Mr Selden: What will be the fate of the Pak Army in East Pakistan? There will be a massacre if they keep on fighting. ....*

*Mr Johnson: India can afford to withdraw their troops from East Pakistan, once the Mukti Bahini are in the saddle. Adm. Moorer: Not until the Pak Army is destroyed. Mrs. Gandhi has said also that she wants to straighten out the border.*

*Mr Noyes: The more territory Pakistan takes in the West, the more provocation this is to India—the more justification India has to continue.*

*Adm. Moorer: India doesn't need any provocation or justification. They have a plan and they are carrying it out....*

*Adm. Moorer: Is there any way to get NATO into the act?*

*Mr Helms: The British and French don't go along with us.*

*Mr Irwin: But they have said they intend to destroy the Pak Army and Air Force and straighten out the line on Kashmir.*

*Mr Kissinger: If they destroy the army and the air force, Pakistan will be in their paws. The result would be a nation of 100 million people dismembered, their political structure changed by military attack, despite a treaty of alliance with and private assurances by the United States. And all the other countries, on whom we have considered we could rely, such as Iran, would know that this has been done by the weight of Soviet arms and*

*with Soviet diplomatic support. What will be the effect in the Middle East?*

....

*Mr Williams: There are still elements of concession. Don't forget that the spirit of nationalism was terribly strong in East Pakistan even before the fighting broke out...*

*... Mr Kissinger:... We should keep open the option of trying to deter the Indians, by a show of force, if necessary. We could then use that as a bridge to the sort of negotiation.*

(Ref: Document 255, *Foreign Relations, 1969-1976, Vol XI, South Asia Crisis, 1971.*)

### **Dissuading India: All Hands on Deck—Salvage "the 'world's psychological balance of power": 9 December 1971**

*President Nixon and Henry Kissinger met in the White House for another discussion of the crisis in South Asia. Kissinger began by repeating his warning of the dangers of allowing India to dismember Pakistan. He felt that the impact of the dismemberment of a United States ally would "be severe in Iran, in Indonesia, and in the Middle East...Kissinger felt that the United States was in a position to "warn the Russians and the Indians that if this continues we could leak out or in some way make clear that Kennedy made a commitment to Pakistan against aggression from India." "Secondly," he added, "we should move that helicopter ship... and some escort into the Bay of Bengal" ostensibly to evacuate U.S. citizens. He was not, at this point, recommending introduction of the carrier. "From the Chinese angle, I would like to move the carrier. From the public opinion angle, what the press and television would do to us if an American carrier showed up there?" Nixon asked: "Can't the carrier be there for the purpose of evacuation? " Kissinger responded: "But against whom are we going to use the planes? Are we going to shoot our way in?" Nixon asked what good it would do to move a helicopter ship into the area.*

*Kissinger said it would be "a token that something else will come afterward." He also recommended letting "the Jordanians move some of their planes. And I'd get the Indian Ambassador in and demand assurances that India doesn't want to annex territory." . ...Kissinger again highlighted what he saw as the differing approaches to the crisis adopted by the*

*Department of State and the White House. The Department, he said, "would propose a ceasefire in the west in return for in effect our recognition of Bangladesh." Kissinger argued that such an approach would constitute "a total collapse" and "it would hurt us with the Chinese." Nixon, however, felt it was necessary to take account of the "realities" of the situation. "The partition of Pakistan is a fact" he said. "You see those people welcoming the Indian troops when they come in." "Why then," he asked, "are we going through all of this agony?" Kissinger replied: "We are going through this agony to prevent the West Pakistan army from being destroyed. And secondly, to retain our Chinese arm. And thirdly, to prevent a complete collapse of the world's psychological balance of power, which will be produced if a combination of the Soviet Union and the Soviet armed client state can tackle a not insignificant country without anybody doing anything." Kissinger felt that if the United States would "put enough chips into the pot" it could persuade the Soviets "for their own reasons, for the other considerations, to call a halt to it." "What are we going to ask the Russians to do?" Nixon asked. "Ceasefire, negotiation, and subsequent withdrawal," Kissinger responded. "But," he added, "we'd have to clear it with Yahya Khan first." "Ceasefire and negotiation on what basis?" Nixon wanted to know. "Between the Awami League and Islamabad," Kissinger said, "on the basis of the December 1970 election," and "within the framework of a united Pakistan." Withdrawal, he anticipated, would occur after the negotiations "I would keep open the possibility that we'll pour arms into Pakistan...." "I don't see where we will be as a country. I have to tell you honestly I consider this our Rhineland." He warned: "If the Russians come out of it totally cocky, we may have a Middle East war in the spring." ... Nixon observed that opponents of his policy toward South Asia were also concerned about jeopardizing United States relations with India. Kissinger said: "You could argue that it will help us in the long-term with the Indians."*

*Nixon replied: "I don't give a damn about the Indians. "[As explicit a statement of policy as one could have]*

*....Kissinger said: He had favored using a helicopter ship rather than a carrier. Connally (John B. Conally, Secretary of Treasury, February 1971-May 1972) felt that using a carrier would be interpreted by the American public as a threat to intervene militarily. It was a tough decision, Kissinger said, "I go back and forth on it myself." He noted that there were some 200*

*U.S. citizens in East Pakistan.*

*Nixon said: "Goddamn it, I've got a responsibility to protect American lives. I'm going to do it."*

*... Kissinger warned: "The Indians will scream we're threatening them." "Why are we doing it anyway?"*

*Nixon asked. "Aren't we going in for the purpose of strength?" Kissinger shifted ground in the face of Nixon's apparent determination to use the carrier: "I'd move the carrier so that we can tell the Chinese tomorrow to move their forces to the frontier."*

*.....Turning to the political impact of using the carrier, Kissinger noted that it would take 6 days to move the carrier from Southeast Asia to the Bay of Bengal, by which time Congress would be out of session. He said he would talk to Admiral Moorer "to see whether we can keep the carrier back of the Bay of Bengal." Nixon asked: "Then can we move the other helicopter thing in?" Kissinger said "yes".*

*...Nixon reviewed the other decisions reached during the discussion: to encourage the transfer of Jordanian planes to Pakistan; to notify the Chinese about what they had decided to do; to leak the Kennedy commitment to protect Pakistan; and to ask India for assurances that there would be no annexations as a result of the crisis.*

*(Ref: Document 256, Foreign Relations, 1969-1976, Vol XI, South Asia Crisis, 1971.)*

### **"Memorandum of Conversation with a Soviet Official"**

*Washington ... Following an exchange of pleasantries in which Matskevich (Soviet official, very close to Brezhnev) emphasized Mr Brezhnev's warmly anticipated meeting with President Nixon: Nixon: "Now, quite frankly, a great cloud hangs over it—the problem of the Subcontinent." Six-hundred million will win over 60,000,000 people. Pakistan will be cut in half. In the short-range, this may be a gain for the Soviet Union and a setback for China. It is certain to be a tragedy for Pakistan. What is far more significant if the situation continues is the fact that it will poison the whole new relationship between the U.S. and the USSR. The question is, 'are short-term gains for India worth jeopardizing Soviet relations with the U.S.?'*

*The Soviet Union has a treaty with India, but the United States has obligations to Pakistan. The urgency of a ceasefire must be recognized. Nixon said: "I think there is a better way. A better way is for the Soviet Union and the United States to find a method where we can work together for peace in that area. Now, the first requirement is that there be a ceasefire. The second requirement is that, and this is imperative, that the Indians... desist in their attacks on West Pakistan." He went on to propose that a ceasefire be succeeded by political negotiations "within a Pakistan framework.... If the Soviet Union does not restrain the Indians, the United States will not be able to exert any influence with Yahya Khan to negotiate a political settlement with the Awami League."*

*Nixon concluded the conversation by reiterating that it was important not to allow differences over South Asia "to endanger and jeopardize the relations that are far more important." He said: "Now is the time to move, to settle this thing before it blows up to a major confrontation."*

(Ref: Document 257, Foreign Relations, 1969-1976, Vol XI, South Asia Crisis, 1971.)

*Nixon and Kissinger then assessed the meeting after Matskevich and Vorontsov had left. Nixon was pleased with the exchange. "I really stuck it to him." Kissinger predicted: "It will end now. It will end. We will lose 70 percent but that's a hell of a lot better. We were losing 110 percent yesterday." Nixon felt that, at a minimum, his initiative with Matskevich would have the effect of stopping "the goddamn Indians from going to the West."*

*In the context of President's meeting with the bureaucrats to chivy them to coordinate actions ... Kissinger told them afterwards "your loyalty may not be to Nixon but has to be to the USA... So, do speak your mind openly and tell him .... "He then went on to lament: "State was driving him (Kissinger) to tears?.... You have given your views—yesterday he wanted a cable to Keating. That thing takes forever. Yelling at Yahya Khan takes two hours."*

(Ref: Document 258, Foreign Relations, 1969-1976, Vol XI, South Asia Crisis, 1971.)

### **"Backchannel Message From Kissinger to Farland"**

*"Please arrange a meeting with President Yahya Khan on an urgent basis and convey to him the following operative paragraphs of a note received from the Soviet Union today.*

*... "The thing to do now is to stop the war already underway. This requires a ceasefire which would be connected with a simultaneous decision for a political settlement, based on the recognition of the will of the East Pakistani population. Otherwise it is impossible to ensure respect for the lawful rights and interests of the people of East Pakistan and to create conditions for the return of millions of refugees ... of ceasefire and of immediate resumption of negotiations between the Government of Pakistan and the East Pakistani leaders concerning a political settlement in East Pakistan. Those negotiations should, naturally, be started from the stage at which they were discontinued. We feel that this proposal provides a way out for all, including Pakistan.... You should also tell President Yahya Khan that we are under no delusions concerning Soviet aims. On the other hand, it would seem that their proposal has the following advantages:*

- It would gain time and preclude the possibility of destruction of the Pakistani army. The proposal would give Pakistan time. If hostilities resumed India would be in a much worse international position and Pakistan forces would have had a breathing spell.*
- It commits the Soviet Union not to recognize the Bangla Desh.*
- It indicates a measure of disassociation of the Soviet Union from India."*

(Ref: Document 260, Foreign Relations, 1969-1976, Vol XI, South Asia Crisis, 1971.)

### **"Telegram From the Department of State to the Embassy in Pakistan"**

"Raza<sup>7</sup> raised following points: (a) Pakistan facing grave difficulties in East Pakistan, especially lack of air cover and ammo; (b) Soviets heavily committed on side of Indians (according info available to Paks Soviets are manning missile sites in India and in one instance Soviet pilot seen flying Indian plane in India); Raza referred to 1959 bilateral—but said main point was willingness U.S. help Pakistan in hour of need, not specific treaty commitments which might be subject to differing interpretations. Noting that "We depend on you entirely,"

Raza referred to overwhelming majority voting in favor of ceasefire withdrawal in UNGA and stated "by and large world is with us— that gives you a lever. Any action U.S. would take to aid Paks would have UN backing." he added."

(Ref: Document 260, *Foreign Relations, 1969-1976, Vol XI, South Asia Crisis, 1971.*)

**10 DECEMBER 1971**

**"Memorandum of Conversation (UN requested to arrange ceasefire)"**

*UN Special Assistant Paul Marc Henry had received from the commander of the Pakistani forces, Major General Rao Farman Ah Khan, a copy of a message Farman had sent to President Yahya Khan asking him to approve a request by Farman for the UN to arrange for an immediate ceasefire in East Pakistan. Yahya Khan approved Farman's proposal, which stipulated the repatriation of Pakistani forces to West Pakistan, and asked for a guarantee of no reprisals. It was not an offer of surrender, and Farman's message indicated that if the offer was not accepted, Pakistani forces would continue to fight "to the last man."*

*Williams: They'll fight to the death. The Indians are close now. The situation is hopeless.*

*Kissinger: We don't want to be the instrument pushing a Pakistani surrender, when the Chinese are on their side. Bush shouldn't do anything until we hear from Yahya Khan. We want to stop the attack in West Pakistan. There is no objection to this proposal but we must prevent an attack in the West. Get a flash to Farland to get Yahya Khan's views. Tell him it is our judgment we should use it as a basis for a ceasefire in the West.... I saw it. Bhutto's comments are interesting. The DCM's comments suggested he's thinking of reconciliation with India...."*

*Bhutto had said that he was prepared to seek an accommodation with Awami League leaders, including negotiations with Mujibur Rehman. At the appropriate time he was also prepared to go to New Delhi to seek a reconciliation with India.*

*(Ref: Document 263, Foreign Relations, 1969-1976, Vol XI, South Asia Crisis, 1971.)*

### **"Kissinger's Backchannel Message to Farland (FLASH)"**

*"In everything we do with Yahya Khan, we cannot have it said that we stabbed Pakistan in the back. This must be your guiding principle on each issue from this point on."*

*(Ref: Document 265, Foreign Relations, 1969-1976, Vol XI, South Asia Crisis, 1971.)*

### **Nixon and Kissinger Met Again Later that Day, 10 December 1971**

*Kissinger continued: "I've got Vorontsov coming in at 11.30 a.m. and I am going to tell him that what the Pakistanis did in the east was at a result of what we did. Which is true. I am going to show him the Kennedy understanding. I'm going to hand him a very tough note to Brezhnev and say this is it now, let's settle the (matter), let's get a ceasefire now. That's the best that can be done now. They'll lose half of their country, but at least they preserve the other half." Nixon agreed that "our desire is to save West Pakistan." He added. "Coming back to this India-Pakistan thing, have we got anything else we can do?" Kissinger replied: "I think we're going to crack it now." Nixon asked: "Well, the Indians will be warned by the Chinese, right?" Kissinger replied: "Well, I'll have to find out tonight." Nixon said: "You do your best, Henry. This should have been done long ago. The Chinese have not warned the Indians. They haven't warned them that they're going to come in. And that's the point, they've got to warn them."*

*".... We're not doing a goddamn thing, Henry, you know that. We're just moving things around, aren't we?" Kissinger agreed: "Yeah." Nixon then said: "These Indians are cowards, right?"*

*Kissinger replied: "Right, but with Russian backing. You see the Russians have sent notes to Iran, Turkey, to a lot of countries threatening them. The Russians have played a miserable game." ....*

*Nixon said: "We must never recognize Bangladesh... until West Pakistan*

*gives us the go ahead.... I want a program of aid to West Pakistan formulated immediately. We cannot let them hang out there by themselves. "He concurred with Kissinger's observation that "we have to continue to squeeze the Indians, even when this thing is settled... He instructed that economic assistance programmed for India be reprogrammed to help pay for war damage suffered by Pakistan. Nixon also angrily ordered that a concerted effort be made to publicize India's role in the crisis: "Get a white paper out. I want the Indians blamed for this, you know what I mean? We can't let these goddamn, sanctimonious Indians get away with this.... Here they are raping and murdering. They talk about West Pakistan. These Indians are pretty vicious."...*

(Ref: Document 266, *Foreign Relations, 1969-1976, Vol XI, South Asia Crisis, 1971.*)

### **Memorandum from Kissinger to President Nixon: 10 December 1971**

*"The war in the East has reached its final stages. The Indian forces are encircling Dhaka and preparing for the final assault if Pakistani troops refuse to surrender.*

*According to a reliable clandestine source, Mrs Gandhi has said that there are "some indications" that the Chinese intend to intervene militarily. She did not reveal her evidence, but reportedly said that the Chinese may create border incidents in the East before the fall of Dhaka and later take some action in the contested Ladakh area near Kashmir. So far, we have no evidence that the Chinese are actually planning such actions...*

*.... India "neither accepted nor rejected" the General Assembly resolution, but was giving it "serious consideration." Indian Foreign Minister Swaran Singh and Foreign Secretary T.N. Kaul are on their way to New York.*

*Indians have announced a bombing pause over both Dhaka and Karachi for evacuation purposes. Evacuation planes will be given safe conduct into Karachi for four-hour periods today and tomorrow and the Dhaka airport is to be free from attacks for 24 hours so that it can be repaired. Foreign evacuation planes bound for Dhaka will then be given safe conduct for 10 hours on Saturday, on the condition that they land at Calcutta before and after going to Dhaka. On 10 December Kissinger also had a meeting with Vorontsov from USSR.*

*Kissinger showed him the Treaty Document and underlined the significance of the understanding President Kennedy had with President Ayub about coming to Pakistan's assistance. "I showed him the secret treaty. I said now I hope you understand the significance of this. This was followed up by a letter from Nixon to Brezhnev adopting a "tough" posture as recommended by Kissinger."*

(Ref: Document 267, Foreign Relations, 1969-1976, Vol XI, South Asia Crisis, 1971.)

### **Farland Meets Yahya Khan**

*"I met with Yahya Khan in his residence at 10.00 hrs. and conveyed to him the information contained in your message of Dec. 9. Yahya Khan's initial reaction was to indicate a lack of comprehension regarding exactly what was implied by the information conveyed. After I went over the entire subject again and reiterated salient points, Yahya Khan still indicated strong objections because "Russia is giving India everything she wants." I then undertook the hardest "sell job" of my life. After about 30 minutes I brought Yahya Khan around to a point where he was making his own proposition. Except for the slightly different wording and the fact it was his own proposal and not the Russian one, Yahya Khan in fact "bought" the original proposal as delivered."*

(Ref: Document 271, Foreign Relations, 1969-1976, Vol XI, South Asia Crisis, 1971.)

*....Kissinger informed Farland:*

*We are making strongest demarche to Soviets today which proposes that they join with us in supporting provisos contained in my message of December 9...."*

(Ref: Document 272, Foreign Relations, 1969-1976, Vol XI, South Asia Crisis, 1971.)

### **A Game of Ping-Pong, Pong-Ping: Memorandum of Conversation —US-Chinese Diplomacy**

New York, 10 December

## PARTICIPANTS

*Ambassador Huang Hus, PRC Permanent Representative to the United Nations and Ambassador to Canada, Ch'en Ch'u, PRC Deputy Permanent Representative to the United Nations and Director, Information Department, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, T'ang Wen'sheng, Interpreter, Shih Yen-hua, Interpreter*

*Henry A. Kissinger, Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs, Ambassador George Bush, US Representative to the United Nations, Brig. General Alexander M. Haig, Jr., Deputy Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs, Winston Lord, Senior NSC Staff Member.*

*Dr Kissinger: I see you in the newspapers all the time. You're a great publicity expert. And very argumentative!*

*Ambassador Huang: No, I always argue in self-defence.*

*Ch'en Ch'u: He counterattacks in self-defence.*

*Dr Kissinger: Preemptive attack.*

*... Dr Kissinger: Matskevich. These gentlemen (the Chinese) have a file on everybody. Someday I must find out what they know about me; it is more than I do. (Ambassador Huang gestures in mock denial.)....*

*Dr Kissinger: No, I am telling you about this. This is terribly complex. We are barred by law from giving equipment to Pakistan in this situation. And we also are barred by law from permitting friendly countries which have American equipment to give their equipment to Pakistan.*

*So we have worked out the following arrangements with a number of countries. We have told Jordan and Iran and Saudi Arabia, and we will tell Turkey through a channel other than the ones with which Ambassador Bush is familiar. We said that if they decide that their natural security requires shipment of American arms to Pakistan, we are obliged to protest, but we will understand. We will not protest with great intensity. And we will make up to them in next year's budget whatever difficulties they have.*

*On this basis, four planes are leaving Jordan today and 22 over the weekend. Ammunition and other equipment is going from Iran. Ambassador Huang: You mean over the weekend?*

*Kissinger: I now come to a matter of some sensitivity. We have received a report that one of your personnel in a European country, in a conversation with another European, expressed uncertainty about the Soviet dispositions on your borders and a desire for information about them. But we would be prepared at your request, and through whatever sources you wish, to give you whatever information we have about the disposition of Soviet forces. Secondly, the President wants you to know that it's, of course, up to the People's Republic to decide its own course of action in this situation, but if the People's Republic were to consider the situation on the Indian subcontinent a threat to its security, and if it took measures to protect its security, the US would oppose efforts of others to interfere with the People's Republic. We are not recommending any particular steps; we are simply informing you about the actions of others.*

*The movement of our naval forces is still East of the Straits of Malacca and will not become obvious until Sunday evening when they cross the Straits. The Pakistani army in the East has been destroyed. The Pakistani army in the West will run out of what we call POL—gas and oil—in another two to three weeks. We think that the immediate objective must be to prevent an attack on the West Pakistan army by India. We are afraid that if nothing is done to stop it, East Pakistan will become a Bhutan and West Pakistan will become a Nepal. And India with Soviet help would be free to turn its energies elsewhere.... So now you know everything we know! Our judgment is if East Pakistan is to be preserved from destruction, two things are needed—maximum intimidation of the Indians and, to some extent, the Soviets. Secondly, maximum pressure for the ceasefire. At this moment we have—I must tell you one other thing—we have an intelligence report according to which Mrs. Gandhi told her cabinet that she wants to destroy the Pakistani army and air force and to annex this part of Kashmir, Azad Kashmir, and then to offer a ceasefire. This is what we believe must be prevented and this is why I have taken the liberty to ask for this meeting with the Ambassador...."*

*Ambassador Huang: We thank Dr Kissinger very much for informing us of the situation on the subcontinent of India-Pakistan, and we certainly will convey that to Prime Minister Chou En-lai.*

*The position of the Chinese Government on this matter is not a secret. Everything has been made known to the world. And the basic stand we are taking in the UN is the basic stand of our government. Both in the Security*

*Council and the plenary session of the General Assembly we have supported the draft resolutions that have included both the ceasefire and withdrawal, although we are not actually satisfied with that kind of resolution, but.... It shows what the majority of the people in the world support and what they oppose. Because if India, with the aid of the Soviet Union, would be able to have its own way in the subcontinent... Because that would mean the dismemberment and the splitting up of a sovereign country and the creation of a new edition of Manchukuo, the Bangla Desh. It would also mean aggression by military force and the annexation of sovereign territory ....*

*And on this point of view, in my personal opinion, we feel the position taken by the United States Government has been a weak one. The Soviet Union and India now are progressing along on an extremely dangerous track in the subcontinent. And as we have already pointed out this is a step to encircle China.... And the private attitude adopted by Brezhnev which we see now, in which he talks about so-called political negotiations is in fact direct and obvious intervention in the internal affairs of a sovereign country and something we feel is completely unacceptable, is inadmissible.... But from our experience of a longer period we feel that the struggle waged by the people in Pakistan is a just struggle and therefore it is bound to have the support of the Chinese people and the people of the world. Whoever upholds justice and strives to defend their sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity*

*Kissinger: We want to keep the pressure on India, both militarily and politically. We have no interest in political negotiations between Pakistani leaders and East Pakistani leaders as such. The only interest that we possibly have is to get Soviet agreement to a united Pakistan. We have no interest in an agreement between Bangla Desh and Pakistan. ....*

*Ambassador Huang: We feel that the situation on the subcontinent is very tense and is in the process of rapid development and change. And therefore, as I expressed earlier, we will immediately report what you tell me.....: I am clear now.*

*Dr Kissinger: In any event, no matter what you read, no one is authorized to talk to the Bangla Desh. We don't recognize Bangla Desh and will not recognize it.*

*Ambassador Huang: I thank Ambassador Bush very much for his explanation.*

*.... Dr Kissinger: Good. I wish happier occasions would bring us together. We have particular affection for Pakistan because we feel they helped to reestablish contact between the People's Republic and the United States....*

*(Ref: Document 274, Foreign Relations, 1969-1976, Vol XI, South Asia Crisis, 1971.)*

## **11 DECEMBER 1971**

### **"Memorandum from Kissinger to Nixon"**

**"India-Pakistan Situation:** Pakistan late yesterday revised the proposal reported here yesterday morning from Dhaka for a ceasefire, repatriation of Pakistani troops and a transfer of power to the elected representatives of East Pakistan.

On the Western front, there are press reports of the largest tank battles to date in two areas of Kashmir. According to a reliable [less than 1 line of source text not declassified] source, Mrs. Gandhi's staff as of Thursday was still saying that, as soon as the situation in the East is settled, India will launch a major offensive against West Pakistan and hope that all major fighting will be over by the end of the month. This, of course, was before Acting Secretary Irwin made his strong demarche to Ambassador Jha late Thursday concerning India's intentions toward West Pakistan. British also have been pressing the Indians for a statement that their war aims do not include Pak-held Kashmir but so far with no success. Reports are now being circulated in Delhi by the government's Press Information Bureau that the U.S. Seventh Fleet is moving toward the Bay of Bengal.

Sixteen Soviet naval units are now in the Indian Ocean area, including three space support ships. Communications intelligence indicates that most of the ships are near. However, of the sixteen ships less than half are combatants."

*(Ref: Document 275, Foreign Relations, 1969-1976, Vol XI, South Asia Crisis, 1971.)*

*After meeting this morning in New York with Bhutto, Raza and Shahi we*

*have concluded that the proposal we have been considering.....*

*Government of Pakistan will obtain third-country support to introduce resolution in Security Council which will include provision for both ceasefire and withdrawal.*

*It is likely that such a resolution would be vetoed. We would then move to accept simple ceasefire without any linkage to the Soviet formulation which would seek political negotiation. While remaining adamant in step (2) that ceasefire alone is essential first step, we would express willingness to include political negotiation following establishment of ceasefire.*

*Farland responded that he had discussed with President Yahya Khan the UN scenario laid out in Kissinger's message and Yahya Khan had "expressed his full accord with the procedures suggested." Yahya Khan indicated that Ambassador Shah would be instructed accordingly.*

(Ref: Document 276, *Foreign Relations, 1969-1976, Vol XI, South Asia Crisis, 1971.*)

### **A Game of Chequers or Dice or Bluff? Telephone Conversation Between President Nixon and Kissinger**

*December 11, 1971, 3 p.m.*

*RN: Have you kept anybody in State informed on the Bhutto business?*

*HAK: Yes. Well, I have told State of Bhutto's, I have told Rogers about Bhutto's request to see you. And turning it down.*

*RN: The main thing is that they be informed, not totally, but enough so that they know that State [has] a play as to what's going on.*

*HAK: Oh yes, Bush has kept them informed of the Chinese attitude which he got from the permanent representative of Pakistan at the UN.*

*RN: Yeah. I understand. Then that is the way we have to move then.*

*RN: Well, I agree, but that's the way we are going to play and we'll see what the Chinese do, and I am not inclined to think though that if the Chinese do make some threatening moves—I know you are concerned about the fact that they may frighten the Indians and it may stiffen the Russians—but I am not inclined to think so—I don't think the Russians want to get that involved in that area. That's what it really gets down to.*

*HAK: Well, I am pretty sure the Chinese are going to do something and I think that we'll soon see. I may be mistaken—we have no clear intelligence*

*evidence though at this point.*

*RN: No, Bhutto thinks they are, but....*

*HAK: No, no we have independent intelligence.*

*HAK: Absolutely, we have to play it out, give the Russians till tomorrow noon.*

*RN: And then tomorrow at noon, he takes it up there and then we go the second step after that, ceasefire, correct? HAK: Correct.*

*RN: Well, I agree, but that's the way we are going to play and we'll see what the Chinese do, and I am not inclined to think though that if the Chinese do make some threatening moves—I know you are concerned about the fact that they may frighten the Indians and it may stiffen the Russians—but I am not inclined to think so—I don't think the Russians want to get that involved in that area. That's what it really gets down to.*

*HAK: No, no we have independent intelligence.*

*RN: But nothing to indicate that they are moving...*

*HAK: Well, they are calling in the reserves of the mountain divisions.*

*RN: The Indians are now getting greedy.*

*HAK: And they may want to wait until all the East Pakistanis are in Indian hands before they join in an appeal for a ceasefire.*

*RN: Well, the main thing is to keep our col with it and not—keep them in the play and on the affirmative line—we know whatever errors in the past have been—they should not have moved to the strict neutrality... when it was East Pakistan, but now when it is West Pakistan any figment of the suggestion that this was provoked by Pakistan is ridiculous.... Now of course not enough has been made of the fact that the UN General Assembly voted overwhelming for a ceasefire, withdrawal and that the Indians not just the Russians—but the Indians turned it down correct? I guess Bush is hitting it hard and State and all the rest?*

*HAK: Well, Bush is.*

*RN: We ought to hit that very, very hard—this is against the overwhelming weight of world opinion—we happen to have world—we happen to have world opinion on our side.*

(Ref: Document 277, Foreign Relations, 1969-1976, Vol XI, South Asia Crisis, 1971.)

**Telephone Conversation Between President Nixon and Kissinger**

7:30 p.m. (December 11, 1971)

K: We haven't heard from the Russians yet but I've had a call from Bhutto who insisted on seeing you tonight anywhere.

P: Me?

K: Yeah, but I've turned that off. I've turned that off already but that isn't—and I made him tell me what he wanted.

P: Yeah.

K: He said that he had talked with the Chinese. The Chinese had said to him that they were willing to do something and in fact I think that they are going to do something but they said that they had their doubts about us—that we started out by saying aggression; then we pulled off from the word aggression; then we said it wasn't justified; then we pulled off from that and declared strict neutrality. They just don't think that we are firm and they want one word from us what we're going to do if the Russians press them. Of course, you know, I couldn't help Bhutto.

P: Yeah.

K: And, a... of course, there is a lot in what they're saying. It isn't that you put ideas before anyone else and we are caught by a domestic public opinion and the Senate and the bureaucracy that creates a tough situation. What we are facing now tomorrow is: if we can hear from the Russians and can go with that game plan we are all right, but if we don't hear by tomorrow morning what we'll have to decide is whether to issue a statement along the lines of what we put in the letter to Brezhnev saying, "If this continues it will be naked aggression against the country toward which we have obligations." According to Bhutto, they said the Russians are the biggest brutes and cowards in the world and the only reason this is going on is because everyone knows the United States is weak. I'm just quoting you what he said, I'm not making a judgment.

P: Yes, okay.

K: There is something in it. It's not that the President is weak, it's.

P: Well, what do we have to do at this point?

K: Well, at this point, there is nothing we need to do tonight. We have to decide that when we go to the Security Council tomorrow, we do it with some real pizazz.

... P: Yes, I think, well I think that is quite clear and we have to use the word aggression—naked aggression.

*K: And what we could do is announce that the President has asked Bush to take it back to the Security Council.*

*P: Yes.*

*P: Yeah, well it would be my inclination to go in that direction.*

*K: And if we do that we might consider telling the Russians tonight that that is what we are going to do.*

*P: Ahmmm, telling the Russians before we hear from them.*

*K: Well, if we don't hear from them by noon tomorrow we will have to state our position publicly and discuss their involvement.*

*P: Well, it would seem that that's probably what we'll have to do in terms of the words to inform the Russians that... that's how we should do it, you will inform Vorontsov tonight that we're going to take it to the Security Council tomorrow or how would we go about it?*

*K: That we will then take public steps, including Security Council steps, in which we will publicly have to say what their role is.*

*P: Well, I would rather it be stated in which it will be clear what their role is—that the steps would inevitably show what their role is unless they cooperate in a policy of stopping the aggression at this point.*

*K: Well, stopping the war, they don't even have to agree to stopping the aggression.*

*P: Stopping the war, or bring about a ceasefire.*

*K: Yah.*

*P: That seems to be reasonable. I have my doubts that the Chinese will do anything.*

*K: I think that they will do something now.*

*P: You do, huh.*

*K: Yah. Haig does too.*

*P: Well, that they will do something, you mean where?*

*K: I do not believe that they will let—they will do what they did in Korea—I do not think they will let these people get at their borders.*

*P: That's what it gets to isn't it, yeh. K: Yeh.*

*P: Let the Indians get at their borders.*

*K: Well, Haig says he saw movies tonight, a TV film, and he said that the amount of Russian equipment is just massive.*

*P: (unclear)*

*K: No, unfortunately not, Mr President. This is heartbreaking, but we've got to get on top of it and I think we've got to get out the story better. I mean we*

*shilly-shallied, I mean not we, there have been too many conflicting signals coming out and I saw the Agronsky (note) show tonight and these bleeding hearts are saying that we are driving India away and that no one mentions what the Russians are doing.*

*P: Right, ahmmm... That's very, very unlikely but on the other hand I think the thing to do in terms of our American opinion is just to go right ahead with our public... (K interrupts).*

*K: Well you know what the line now is Mr President, they are all attacking you on personal pique and we have to get that out, goddammit you are defending as always the national interest. And for that we have to make clear what the Russians have been doing.*

*P: Ahmm.*

*K: And there was no personal pique involved there.*

*P: Of course not, you mean in terms of our decisions here—not at all—it had nothing to do with that.*

*K: And we may have to let out the Kennedy commitment to Pakistan, if worse comes to worse.*

*P: Yes. Bhutto knows about that doesn't he?*

*K: Well, I haven't told him. We may, you know as we say we have obligations. Some people say what are the obligations—we'll put out the Kennedy thing.*

*P: The purpose of that being to what?*

*K: The purpose of that being to make clear that you haven't acted out of personal feelings, but to protect the ... but to keep the word of an American President and also to warn the Russians that this isn't a free shot.*

*P: Yup, that makes sense, makes sense. All right, let the message go to the Russians. See what happens tomorrow on it.*

(Ref: Document 278, Foreign Relations, 1969-1976, Vol XI, South Asia Crisis, 1971.)

### **Transcript of Telephone Conversation Between Kissinger and the Minister of the Soviet Embassy (Vorontsov)**

**Washington, December 11, 1971, 7:35 p.m**

*HK: Yuly, I have just talked to the President and as you know, we are leaving for the Azores tomorrow at noon. He has asked me to tell you that if we don't hear from you by tomorrow morning that we will proceed unilaterally. We have now waited for 48 hours and in a matter that affects the peace of the world in these circumstances we will proceed unilaterally and if we do we will have to state our view about the involvement of other countries.*

*YV: I see, of course you know that Kuznetsov is embarked on a mission to India now; and I have reasons to believe that that's in direct connection to whatever we have discussed here. HAK: When did he leave?*

*YV: He left this morning Moscow time—I don't have any official word to you about that, but I know it is directly connected. So, of course, I will transmit the message to Moscow.*

*HAK: I cannot stress to you sufficiently seriously how gravely we view the situation.*

*YV: Yes, I understand that, but I think that the mutual view of the situation now Kuznetsov trip to Delhi are underlying that. I think we might have something from Moscow tomorrow, but of course the results of his talks there is only to predict they are [omission in the source text] is going to be. (Kissinger called President Nixon at 8:45 p.m. and told him that he had learned from Vorontsov that the Soviet leadership had despatched Kuznetsov to New Delhi. Kissinger saw that as a positive development but Nixon was skeptical.)*

(Ref: Document 279, Foreign Relations, 1969-1976, Vol XI, South Asia Crisis, 1971.)

#### **"Telephone Conversation Between the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger) and Deputy Prime Minister Bhutto"**

*December 11, 1971.*

*HAK: Mr Bhutto. I have talked to the President and here is our view on the subject. First, in the light of all we have done, it is absolutely essential that we are not exposed to Chinese charges that we are not doing enough. Because if that is going to be the charge why should we do anything? I mean we are standing alone against our public opinion, against our whole bureaucracy at the very edge of legality. Bhutto: Uh huh, I realize that*

*fully.*

*HAK: So the Chinese just have to be made to understand what we are doing. Bhutto: They will*

*HAK: Now secondly, if we do not hear from the Soviets tomorrow by tomorrow morning in reply to the presentations we have made to them, we will then go to the Security Council with a strong statement that a continuation of the war would be a naked case of aggression, and we would support our original resolution. I mean we will make the public statement, in that case there can be no doubt where we stand. Bhutto: Yes.*

*HAK: Now after our original resolution is defeated, however, Mr Minister, then I think you have to decide whether you want to go to a simple ceasefire resolution, because it isn't that we don't want to help you, it is that we want to preserve you. It is all very well to stand for principles, but finally we have to assure your survival. And that is the Chinese problem. We are heartbroken about what has happened, but our immediate problem now is what I told you this morning to assure your survival, so what we will do is first thing by tomorrow noon, [if] we have not an agreement on this procedure which we discussed this morning, then we will go to the Security Council. So your Chinese friends and our new Chinese acquaintances will have no reason to question where we stand.*

*Bhutto: No, but I hope you don't misunderstand.*

*HAK: Also, our Fleet will be crossing the Straits of Malacca tomorrow night, and then it will be partly visible.*

*Bhutto: I will make it abundantly clear to them tomorrow. I want you to know that it is deeply appreciated what you are doing and we are eternally beholden.*

*HAK: Well, we are doing it for ourselves too.*

*Bhutto: You will see the affects of that when this crisis is over how we will express our appreciation.*

*HAK: No you don't have to worry about that, Mr Prime Minister. We know where our friends are and you have been a loyal friend.*

(Ref: Document 280, Foreign Relations, 1969-1976, Vol XI, South Asia Crisis, 1971.)

## We Are Coming Off Like Men Armageddon?

*At 8:45 a.m. on December 12, 1971, the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs Henry Kissinger met President Nixon in the Oval Office of the White House to discuss developments in South Asia. Kissinger's deputy Alexander Haig joined the conversation later. The conversation, which lasted nearly an hour, dealt at some length with Nixon's desire to mount a public relations campaign to brand India as an aggressor. Nixon spoke of what he viewed as the damning report on Prime Minister Gandhi's meeting with her Cabinet in which she outlined India's war aims, and Kissinger said that he had asked Helms to "put it out through covert channels."*

*Nixon and Kissinger spent some time discussing the hot line message to be sent later that morning to Brezhnev. Nixon said: "Basically all we're doing is asking for a reply. We're not letting the Russians diddle us along "does that sound like a good plan to you?" Kissinger replied: "It's a typical Nixon plan. I mean it's bold. You're putting your chips into the pot again. But my view is that if we do nothing, there is a certainty of disaster. This way there is a high possibility of one, but at least we're coming off like men. And that helps us with the Chinese."*

*Nixon said: "That's right. And if it goes down the tube now we'll have done the best we can." Kissinger concurred: "If it goes down the tube [it will be] because we can't get anyone to support us. By tomorrow our fleet will be in the Indian Ocean." After a discussion about Southeast Asia, Nixon returned to South Asia and expressed the conviction that the Chinese, the Soviets, and the Indians needed to be shown that the "man in the White House" was tough.*

*The conversation focused heavily on China and what the Chinese Government could be expected to do as the crisis unfolded. Early in the conversation Kissinger said: "I called Bhutto yesterday evening after we talked just for the record, and I said I don't want to hear one more word from the Chinese. We are the ones who have been operating against our public opinion, against our bureaucracy, at the very edge of legality.... And if they want to talk, they should move some troops. And until they have done so we don't want to hear one more word."*

*Haig entered in the middle of the conversation with the news that the Chinese wanted to meet on an urgent basis. Because Nixon and Kissinger were on the point of leaving for the Azores, the Chinese proposed a meeting*

*in New York between Haig and Chinese Ambassador Huang Hua. The Chinese initiative in calling for a meeting was "totally unprecedented" Kissinger said. He concluded that the request meant: "They're going to move! No question, they're going to move." The tenor of the conversation changed at that point from the earlier expressed concern that China would not make the necessary military moves to help restrain India, to a concern over the implications of the military action China had apparently decided upon! ....*

*Nixon asked Haig if he agreed that the Chinese request for a meeting "means they are going to move"? Haig concurred with Kissinger's assessment. That raised the question of the likelihood of Soviet military action against China in the event of Chinese military moves that menaced India. Kissinger said: "If the Soviets move against them and then we don't do anything, we'll be finished." Nixon asked: "So what do we do if the Soviets move against them? Start lobbing nuclear weapons in, is that what you mean?" Kissinger responded: "If the Soviets move against them in these conditions and succeed, that will be the final showdown. We have to—and if they succeed we will be finished. We'll be through."*

*Kissinger tentatively suggested: "Then we better call them [the Chinese] off." But he quickly concluded: "I think we can't call them off frankly." Haig said: "I think that if you call them off, if we don't give them some assurances,...the price you pay for that is almost as bad as if you" Kissinger interjected: "If we call them off, I think our China initiative is pretty well down the drain." Nixon agreed: "That's what I think." He added: "And our China initiative is down the drain. And also our stroke with the Russians is very, very seriously jeopardized." Kissinger went on: "If the Russians get away with facing down the Chinese and if the Indians get away with licking the Pakistanis, what we are now having is the final—we may be looking down the gun barrel." More hopefully Kissinger noted: "It's the Chinese view which they expressed to Bhutto yesterday that the Soviets will back off." He added: "I think the Soviets will back off if we face them." Nixon said: "Well that's the point. The reason that I suggested that the Chinese move is that they talked about the Soviet divisions on their border and all that sort of thing. You know that the Soviets at this point aren't about to go ripping into that damn mess, having in mind the fact that they're gaining from the Indian thing." Kissinger said: "Well we've got to trigger this quickly, so that we are positioned, and not at the tail of the Chinese.*

*Otherwise we have no moral authority whatsoever for supporting the Chinese." Nixon asked: "Bhutto asked the Chinese to move too didn't he?" Kissinger responded: "They are not doing it because of us." Nixon said: "That's what I mean. Let me just get that straight right away. Why are the Chinese moving?" Kissinger answered: "We asked, but that's not the reason they're doing it." Nixon concurred: "The way you put it Henry, the way you put it is very different as I understand. You said look we're doing all these things why don't you threaten them. Remember I said threaten, move a couple of people". He added: "We have to scare these bastards." Kissinger stated: "I said we will prevent pressures on you from other countries. But it is immaterial who made them do it. We didn't make them do it. They are acting for the same reason they (sic) when we approached the Chinese border in Korea." Nixon asked: "Is that what you think Al?" Haig responded: "Yes sir." Kissinger said: "It's exactly the same situation. But leaving aside whether we made them do it or not, we did not make them do it, my feeling would be the same, Mr President, if I had not talked to them on Friday. They don't move that fast. This has been building up. My feeling is, Mr President, leaving completely aside what we said, if the outcome of this is that Pakistan is swallowed by India, China is destroyed, defeated, humiliated by the Soviet Union, it will be a change in the world balance of power of such magnitude that the security of the United States for, maybe forever, certainly for decades—we will have a ghastly war in the Middle East." Nixon interjected: "Now we really get into the numbers game. You've got the Soviet Union with 800 million Chinese, 600 million Indians, the balance of Southeast Asia terrorized, the Japanese immobile, the Europeans of course will suck after them, and the United States the only one, we have maybe parts of Latin America and who knows." "This is why, Mr President," Kissinger said "you'll be alone." Nixon responded: "We've been alone before."*

*Kissinger asked Nixon if, given the menacing developments that appeared to be breaking in the South Asia crisis, he should stay in Washington rather than accompany Nixon to the Azores. Nixon felt that it was important that he be perceived to be making the decisions. Hence leaving Kissinger behind to deal with the crisis "wouldn't do." Haig was therefore instructed to respond to the Chinese request and to schedule a meeting. Kissinger said: "We've got to get this triggered quickly. So that we are positioned. I mean this leaves no doubt now what we've got to do." Nixon agreed: "Right. Now*

*let's come back to this for a minute. You say that they want to see Al, tell him they are going to move. What they want in the way of assurances, they may be want something more direct. Well, let me see, the Kennedy memorandum of November 5, 1962 [unclear] and that's what they'll think.*" Kissinger said: "They'll believe you."

Nixon continued: "The point is, the fact of the matter is when I put it in more Armageddon terms than reserves, when I say the Chinese move and the Soviets threaten and we start lobbing nuclear weapons, that isn't what happens. That isn't what happens. What happens is that we then do have a hot line to the Soviets, and we finally just say now what goes on here?" Kissinger said: "We don't have to lob nuclear weapons. We have to go on alert." Nixon agreed. Kissinger continued: "We have to put forces in. We may have to give them bombing assistance." Nixon added: "One thing we can do which you forgot. We clean up Vietnam at about that point." Kissinger concurred: "We clean up Vietnam. I mean at that point we give an ultimatum to Hanoi, blockade Haiphong." Nixon said: "That's right." Kissinger continued: "Now that will hurt China too but we can't worry about that at that point." Nixon interjected: "Well, we'll say it was for the purpose of protecting Americans." Kissinger said: "And above all, we have to give the Chinese the sense that if the Russians threaten them, the worst thing, we cannot desert them then move against Haiphong, because that would then say that the U.S. and China We'll pick up North Vietnam in the process of that. I mean, North Vietnam will be finished then. If Russia and China are at war, we can pick it up at any time."

Nixon upon consideration concluded that "Russia and China aren't going to go to war." Kissinger rejoined: "I wouldn't bet on that Mr President." Nixon said: "Well, let me put it this way. I have always felt that India and Pakistan, inevitably would have a war. And there can always be a war in the Mideast. As far as Russia and China is [are] concerned there are other factors that are too overwhelming at this particular point for them to go at each other." Kissinger demurred: "Well, Mr President, the Russians first of all are not rational on China. Secondly, if they can get a pretext to wipe out China then your trip and everything else is an incident. Your trip in their minds was an incident on the road where they would isolate China, and then could turn against China in '73-74. Now that works fine with us because it puts China over on our side and we could play. But if they see an" Nixon interjected: "What are you trying to suggest here? Are you trying

*to get to the point that maybe we tell the Chinese we won't back them?" Kissinger responded: "No, I think we have to tell them we will back them." Nixon asked: "What do you think Al? You think we should tell them we won't back them and discourage them?" Haig responded: "I think they may premise action on three things. One is they said the Soviets are cowards. The United States stood the Soviets down recently in Cuba and in the Middle East." Nixon asked: "Do they know that? You told them that, is that right?" Kissinger answered: "No, they said that to Bhutto." Nixon said: "If you think they believe that then they got the message where nobody else did." Kissinger said: "The Chinese respect you." Nixon asked: "How the hell do they know that we stood them down in Cuba, for example? You must have told them that." Kissinger responded: "I told them that." Nixon asked: "How about the Middle East? How do they know we stood them down there?" Kissinger answered: "Well, because they see what happened When all is said and done, they know that Syrian tanks pulled back unconditionally." Reverting to Nixon's earlier question, Haig's advice was: "Tell the Soviets today the direction in which we are moving, and it's going to up the ante of concern." Nixon said: "Suppose the Chinese move and the Soviets threaten, then what do we do?" Haig responded: "Well, we've got to move I think beforehand with the Soviets." Haig counseled that the Soviets should be warned that "a war would be unacceptable." Kissinger concurred: "As soon as the Chinese move, we have to tell them that. We can't tell them before the Chinese move, because it would look like collusion." Nixon agreed: "That's right, that's right, OK." Nixon and Kissinger agreed that the message they were planning to send to Brezhnev would have to be strengthened. (Instructive to observe the mechanism of policy, planning, formulation and implementation as practised by the world's pre-eminent power.)*

(Ref: Document 281, Foreign Relations, 1969-1976, Vol XI, South Asia Crisis, 1971.)

### **Anti-climax**

*Acting on the instructions he had received from the President, Haig met in New York with the Chinese Ambassador Huang Hua on the afternoon of December 12. Contrary to expectations, Haig learned that the Chinese*

*initiative did not mean that China had decided upon military action in support of Pakistan. Instead, Huang Hua indicated that China was prepared to support the United Nations procedure Kissinger had outlined in the December 10 meeting, which was to ask for a ceasefire and mutual troop withdrawal but to settle for a standstill ceasefire.*

*(Ref: Document 281, Foreign Relations, 1969-1976, Vol XI, South Asia Crisis, 1971.)*

### **"Memorandum From Kissinger to President Nixon"**

*Washington, December 12, 1971.*

*SUBJECT: Situation Report on South Asia*

*When Ambassador Farland asked for President Yahya Khan's views on a ceasefire at midnight (EST) last night, Yahya Khan said that he was prepared to do "anything reasonable under the circumstances." Soviet First Deputy Foreign Minister Kuznetsov flew into Delhi today at the head of a five-man delegation. Former Indian Ambassador to Moscow, D.P. Dhar, who negotiated the Indo-Soviet treaty, has flown to Moscow. Both moves are billed as made under the consultation provision of the treaty.*

*At the UN Bhutto is presently inclined to return to the Security Council to seek a resolution identical to the one adopted in the General Assembly. Bush feels that some members of the eleven who voted with us in the Security Council previously, including China, would not have much enthusiasm for simply provoking another Soviet veto. Bhutto regards one advantage of this course as further discrediting the USSR in the eyes of the 104 nations who voted in favour. Bhutto is more interested in mounting a public campaign against India and the Soviets. Yahya Khan's comments to Farland, however, suggest that Bhutto may receive instructions to accept a ceasefire resolution with at least implications of a negotiated withdrawal and political settlement to follow.*

*... Bush also reports Foreign Minister Singh's view that the UN cannot take useful action at this time. If the UN does meet, he will insist that Bangla Desh representatives be present. He maintained that India's recognition of Bangla Desh had two purposes: (1) to make clear that India had no territorial ambitions in East Pakistan and (2) to establish a moderate,*

*elected democratic group in an effort to control the Mukti Bahini.*

*... Singh said India has no territorial aims in West Pakistan but cautioned that this commitment is not open-ended if Pakistan continues the war and tries to make gains in the west to compensate for losses in the east. Under questioning, Singh would not make the same unequivocal commitment on Azad Kashmir. Foreign Secretary Kaul said, "we have no major ambitions." Even in peace time, Kaul said, India and Pakistan had talked about minor rectifications in the border. Both Singh and Kaul repeatedly said that they do not wish to prolong the war.*

*The evacuation of 300 foreign nationals from Dhaka was completed this morning, including more than 100 Americans. Four British C-130's with UN markings completed the job. (In a way, that made the ostentious arrival of the 7th Fleet redundant, unless it had in store tasks other than mere evacuation.)*

*Yesterday there was a clandestine report from Islamabad that Yahya Khan had told his prime minister designate that the Chinese ambassador in Islamabad had assured him that within 72 hours the Chinese army would move toward the Northeast Frontier Agency border of India. CIA and DIA report this morning that no information has yet been received of any unusual activity by Chinese forces in Tibet.*

*In East Pakistan, Pakistani forces continue to regroup for the defence of Dhaka. In contrast to the 30,000 or more Pakistanis that could be mustered there, the Indians have roughly 60,000 men in three divisions moving toward the city with at least as many more in reserve near East Pakistan's borders. The guerrillas are also poised outside the city. In the west, fighting in the Kashmir and Punjab areas continues with little significant movement by either side. In the southern sector on the western front, the Indians claim now to be some 30 miles inside Pakistan's Sind Province. If the Indians press toward Hyderabad, Pakistan might have to divert forces from the north to prevent Karachi from being cut off from the rest of the country....*

(Ref: Document 282, *Foreign Relations, 1969-1976, Vol XI, South Asia Crisis, 1971.*)

### **Cornering the Bear**

Kissinger began the conversation by reporting to Nixon: "I got the answer

*from the Russians. They are giving us a full reply later. The interim reply is that they have an assurance from Mrs. Gandhi that she will not attack West Pakistan. And that they will work out— they are working with her now to work out a ceasefire.*" Nixon commented: "We must not be in a position where the Russians and we settle the son-of-a-bitch and leave the Chinese out." Turning to the decision made earlier in the morning to confront the Soviet Union with military force, if necessary, in support of China, Kissinger said: "What you did this morning Mr President was an heroic act."

Nixon responded: "I had to do it." He ruminated that the prevailing instinct in the government was to avoid difficult choices: "It's the whole attitude, the whole government, the whole American establishment would say, well don't borrow trouble. It's all going to work out. Nothing ever works out unless you do something about it. That's the trouble with the world." He barked back to the appeasement of Hitler before World War II and ascribed the war to the "pusillanimous" conduct of the Western allies when confronted with Hitler's challenge. Kissinger pointed to the contrastingly strong stand Nixon had taken in the present crisis: "When I showed Vorontsov the Kennedy treaty they knew they were looking down the gun barrel." Nixon asked: "Did he react?" Kissinger replied: "Oh yeah. "He suggested that it was time "to turn the screw another half turn." In his view, if the United States was to ease up on the pressure on India and the Soviet Union "we've had it." "Therefore," he added, "my strong recommendation is that we trigger this UN thing as quickly as we possibly can because it is the only way we can go on record now of condemning India." Nixon concurred: "That's right." Kissinger felt that it was "essential" that the condemnation be leveled initially in a White House statement. Kissinger put forward a draft of such a statement and Nixon approved it. Kissinger was confident that events were moving in the right direction: "We've got them. But the big problem now is, Mr President, not to give the—is to—if we play this thing well we'll come out ahead with both the Chinese and the Russians." He went on: "We are doing this Mr President with no cards whatsoever." Nixon felt he had one card: "The Russians want something from us."

The optimism engendered by the Soviet response was tempered, near the end of the conversation, by the fact that the crisis still could take a dangerous turn. Kissinger said: "The Chinese may come anyway and we'll have to face the Russians down anyway." Nixon responded: "Yeah, but if

*the Russians and the Chinese come now they will come" [apparently Nixon did not feel that a military confrontation with the Soviet Union was as likely as it seemed earlier], "The Russians want to settle it with us. If this means anything, now there is one great problem. As I said, I may be wrong, but Communists generally use negotiations for the purpose of screwing, not for the purpose of settling."*

*Kissinger felt that the Soviets were "too scared" to play a devious game with the negotiations. He referred again to the Kennedy commitment to Pakistan as convincing Vorontsov that the United States "meant business." Kissinger felt that the Soviet Union was not ready for a military confrontation with the United States. "In 73-74 they may have you. They're not ready yet." He added: "We must tell the Chinese what the message is. We must inform them." Nixon asked: "The Russian message?" Kissinger responded: "Yeah." Nixon said: "That the Russians are—that as a result of the President's ultimatum I'd put it that way; the Russians have now" Kissinger interjected: "I showed them the message, to tell you the truth." It remained, Kissinger felt, "to see what they [the Chinese] want." ...Both then got busy to draft a reply to Russia ...in the process, they conversed speaking their minds openly and aloud. Nixon reverted to the public statement the White House would issue condemning India and observed that in issuing the statement the United States would be "putting it to the Indians." "The argument against putting it to the Indians," he said, "is, as you know, that well if we put it to the Indians then they will stiffen their backs and say screw you." Kissinger interjected: "They won't."*

*Nixon continued: "But my view is that... they seem to be affected by world opinion. To the extent that they are goddamn it we're going to get it across that world opinion is against them." ...*

(Ref: Document 283, *Foreign Relations, 1969-1976, Vol XI, South Asia Crisis, 1971.*)

## The Soviets Agree

### **Moscow, 12 December 1971, Message From the Soviet Leadership to President Nixon**

*The first contacts with the Government of India and personally with Prime*

*Minister I. Gandhi on the question which was raised by President Nixon in his letter testify to the fact that the Government of India has no intention to take any military actions against West Pakistan. The Soviet leaders believe that this makes the situation easier and hope that the Government of Pakistan will draw from this appropriate conclusions.*

*As far as other questions raised in the President's letter are concerned the answers will be given in the shortest of time.*

(Ref: Document 284, Foreign Relations, 1969-1976, Vol XI, South Asia Crisis, 1971.)

### **US Masterminding**

#### **UNSC Kissinger Briefs a Meeting:**

*Kissinger: Let me give you the President's decisions:*

*—Bush will go to the Security Council.*

*—Ziegler will put out the following statement. [He reads the White House statement],*

*—We want on record the strongest possible statement calling for an immediate ceasefire and withdrawal.*

*—If this is vetoed, we must call this aggression.*

*—Instructions are to go to Bush; the timing is today.*

*—There will be no backgrounding. There must be a united government for the next 72 hours.*

*Irwin: Bush is to introduce this resolution?*

*Kissinger: Either we do it ourselves or we get some others to do it, for example, Somalia. The resolution should be based on the General Assembly Resolution. Bush should work with Bhutto to get the strategy clear. After this, if it's vetoed, we may be able to fall back if Bhutto wants it.*

Text of statement to be issued from the White House is finalised as:

*"On December 7th the General Assembly by a vote of 104 to 11 with 10 abstentions called on India and Pakistan to institute an immediate ceasefire and to withdraw troops from each other's territory. Pakistan has accepted the resolution. India has refused. In view of India's defiance of world*

*opinion expressed by such an overwhelming majority the United States is now returning the issue to the Security Council. With East Pakistan virtually occupied by Indian troops, a continuation of the war would take on increasingly the character of armed attack on the very existence of a member state of the UN. All permanent members of the Security Council have an obligation to end this threat to world peace on the most urgent basis. The United States will cooperate fully in this effort."*

(Ref: Document 285, *Foreign Relations, 1969-1976, Vol XI, South Asia Crisis, 1971.*)

## **US Carries Four Members Out of Five in UNSC**

### **The UNSC Resolution**

*The Security Council convened at the request of the United States on December 12. Bush reviewed the evolution of the crisis to that point, pointed to the resolution adopted by the General Assembly on December 7 which had called for a ceasefire and the withdrawal of forces, and noted that Pakistan had accepted the terms but India had not. Bush charged India with responsibility for broadening the crisis and for obstructing, with Soviet support, United Nations efforts to facilitate a solution. He said the Security Council had a responsibility to demand that India comply with the Assembly's resolution. Bush introduced a resolution which, in its operative paragraphs, called for an immediate ceasefire, the withdrawal by India and Pakistan of their armed forces from each other's territory, and the creation of conditions necessary to safeguard the lives of civilians and to facilitate the safe return of the refugees to their homes. The Security Council voted 11-2 in favor of the resolution, with 2 abstentions. The resolution was not adopted because of the negative vote of the Soviet Union.*

(Ref: Document 285, *Foreign Relations, 1969-1976, Vol XI, South Asia Crisis, 1971.*)

## **USS Enterprise (Nuclear) and Party**

*Kissinger: The Fleet is to go.*

*Moorer: The plan is to move through the Strait and then into the Indian Ocean. In 45 hours they can move where we want them. It's a carrier, 4 destroyers, an oiler and amphibious force (the Tripoli) with three destroyers-all set to go at daylight Monday, their time. Kissinger: Send it where there are Americans—say, Karachi. Defence can comment that they're sent to help in a possible evacuation. Irwin: Will we announce it?*

*Kissinger: Wait for a question. Are there any Americans in West or East Pakistan? Irwin: Yes, in both.*

*Reference is to the Malacca Straits separating Malaysia and Indonesia which the carrier force that had been stationed off Vietnam was expected to traverse the evening of December 12, Washington time. The force was expected to arrive off East Pakistan by the morning of December 16.*

(Ref: Document 285, *Foreign Relations, 1969-1976, Vol XI, South Asia Crisis, 1971.*)

## **Nixon on Hotline**

*Message from Nixon to Brezhnev (On hotline)*

*"Mr General Secretary,*

*I have just received your interim message concerning the grave situation in the Indian Subcontinent.*

*.... However, after delaying for 72 hours in anticipation of your reply ....I had set in train certain moves in the United Nations Security Council. These cannot now be reversed. I must also note that the Indian assurances still lack any concreteness.*

*In view of the urgency of the situation and the need for concerted action I propose that we continue closest consultations through established confidential channels. I cannot emphasize too strongly that time is of the essence to avoid consequences neither of us want."*

(Ref: Document 286, *Foreign Relations, 1969-1976, Vol XI, South Asia Crisis, 1971.*)

## **Foot Soldiering: Telephone Conversation Between Kissinger and Vorontsov**

*HAK: The steps we had started are no longer reversible. I want you to understand that. I want us to understand each other. We are calling a Security Council meeting to ask for implementation of the General Assembly resolution. Then when we are still prepared we are sending a hot line message to Brezhnev to tell him that we still are prepared to do what we told you on the 10th. This will give you a chance to send instructions to your people and we will be working with the Pakistanis. We had no choice. We had to make our position clear.*

*...Vorontsov: Do you think that whole situation is that urgent for all these steps. We are talking very actively with the Indians and I think we will have results in several hours.*

*.... HAK: Our greatest desire is to cooperate with you. But when we didn't hear from you I told you that by 9:00 we would move. I told you on Friday I was holding it up for 48 hours. I was hoping to hear something from you last night.*

(Ref: Document 287, *Foreign Relations, 1969-1976, Vol XI, South Asia Crisis, 1971.*)

## **They Talk Again Within an Hour**

*K: Yuli, I just talked to the President again. I reported our conversation to him and he asked me to tell you that we will work it out in a spirit so there are no winners or losers. And so we are not looking for any public humiliation of anybody.*

*... V: That is very important what they are doing in Delhi—a solution acceptable to you, to us, the Indians and to Pakistan.*

(Ref: Document 288, *Foreign Relations, 1969-1976, Vol XI, South Asia Crisis, 1971.*)

## **India Denies Territorial Ambition, but J&K Is a Part**

*Ambassador Jha met with Under Secretary Irwin in Washington later in the*

*day, he also addressed the concerns Irwin had expressed on December 9 about India's war aims; Jha stressed that India had no territorial ambitions, although he said his government had reservations about offering such assurances unless Pakistan provided similar assurances. The concern was to avoid giving Pakistan the opportunity to wage war with nothing to lose. Jha added that India held to the position that Kashmir belonged to India, therefore any assurance relating to territorial ambitions would not necessarily apply to Azad Kashmir. Irwin reiterated that the United States would find unacceptable any attempt by India to alter the border between India and Pakistan in Kashmir.*

*(Ref: Document 289, Foreign Relations, 1969-1976, Vol XI, South Asia Crisis, 1971.)*

### **Haig Speaks to Vorontsov Seven Hours Later**

H: Yes. I just spoke to them. He asked me to hold up our Seventh Fleet movements, and we are going to put that movement in orbit for 24 hours at a place so it won't surface—the fact that they are moving.... (In his memoirs, Kissinger states that the decision to delay the movement of the fleet was taken to give the Soviet Union more time to respond to the hot line message sent to Moscow earlier in the day)

*(Ref: Document 290, Foreign Relations, 1969-1976, Vol XI, South Asia Crisis, 1971.)*

**13 DECEMBER 1971**

### **("Message From the Soviet Leadership to President Nixon"**

*We have attentively examined your message over the direct communications link. In accordance with the confidential exchange of opinions existing between us, we are advising you that at the present time, we are conducting a clarification of all the circumstances in India. We will inform you of the results of the clarification without delay.*

(Ref: Document 291, Foreign Relations, 1969-1976, Vol XI, South Asia Crisis, 1971.)

Haig sends a message to Farland so that he could talk to Yahya Khan on the subject given below:

*"Bhutto approached Bush in New York with a suggestion that the following amendment to our SC resolution be discussed with Soviets in an effort to get a compromise: 'Calls upon the GOP to take effective action towards a political settlement in East Pakistan, giving immediate recognition to the will of the East Pak population within the framework of one Pakistan.' This as you know marks departure from game plan and we are concerned that introduction of this type of clause, particularly at this point, could lead to quick dissolution of our position." (However: Yahya Khan approved the amendment proposed by Bhutto. Sultan Khan<sup>8</sup> emphasized the importance of an immediate ceasefire in order to stop what he characterized as the 'slaughter' in East Pakistan)*

(Ref: Document 292, Foreign Relations, 1969-1976, Vol XI, South Asia Crisis, 1971.)

**Kissinger to Haig (Top Secret, Flash, Sensitive, Exclusively Eyes Only.)**

*...As for fleet, I am weighing advantage of moving it against risk of being called off prematurely by public pressure. Can we put it into Singapore for a day? In any event, fleet should go into Indian Ocean.*

(Ref: Document 293, Foreign Relations, 1969-1976, Vol XI, South Asia Crisis, 1971.)

**14 DECEMBER 1971**

**Timely Clarification: Message from the Soviet Leadership to President Nixon**

*...In your letter of December 10 you proceed from a necessity of ceasefire*

*between India and Pakistan with a simultaneous solution of the political settlement based on the recognition of the will expressed by the East Pakistan population. Thus we have now between us a considerable rapprochement of points of views on the ways of reestablishment of peace on Indian subcontinent...*

*...We are in constant contact with the Indian side. One of the results of these very contacts was the message transmitted to you on December 12 that India has no intention to take any military action in connection with West Pakistan. We have firm assurances by the Indian leadership that India has no plans of seizing West Pakistan territory. Thus as far as intentions of India are concerned there is no lack of clarity to which you have referred.*

*... The Indian side has expressed the willingness to ceasefire and withdraw its forces if Pakistani Government withdraws its forces from East Pakistan and peaceful settlement is reached there with the lawful representatives of East Pakistani population, to whom the power will be transferred and conditions will be created for return from India of all East Pakistani refugees. At the same time the Indians have no intentions to impose their will on the East Pakistani people who themselves will determine their fate.*

(Ref: Document 295, Foreign Relations, 1969-1976, Vol XI, South Asia Crisis, 1971.)

### **Haig Sends Telegram to Kissinger**

*At Enclosure is report of near collapse of Pak forces defending Dhaka. U.S. Counsel Spivack is obviously strong proponent of prompt surrender and is apparently focal point for elements sharing this view. Attached also is confirmation that Pak Governor Malik, with evident endorsement of U.S. Counsel, is reporting collapse of Pakistani defences in East Pakistan. This time apparent strength of Pak General Niazi and weakness of Pak General Farman have been adjudicated by Islamabad in favour of early surrender. Ambassador Farland has not reported action to Washington but according to Spivack,<sup>9</sup> Farland is engaged in final negotiations in Islamabad.*

*...From the foregoing it is apparent that the Soviets have delayed just long enough to ensure the collapse of Pakistani forces in the East which in turn will ensure that the will of the East Pakistani population will be expressed*

*in favour of total independence*

*.... At best we can assume that we have an arrangement which will preserve West Pakistan intact, but it will unquestionably fall short of what will be an acceptable arrangement in the East to either the Government of Pakistan or the PRC.*

(Ref: Document 296, *Foreign Relations, 1969-1976, Vol XI, South Asia Crisis, 1971.*)

### **"Most grateful but... Letter from Yahya Khan to President Nixon"**

*"My Dear President Nixon,*

*You must have been informed of the massive supply of tanks of various types including amphibious tanks, heavy guns, anti-aircraft guns and other equipment which the Russians have already slipped (check or is it shipped) through to India in December in addition to the enormous quantities of arms and ammunition that had already reached India during the month of November, by air and by sea. The Russian proposal about the ceasefire, withdrawal and negotiations has by now clearly been demonstrated to have been only a hoax. They are pursuing filibustering tactics in the Security Council. This does not leave any doubt about their aim of making the military conquest of East Pakistan a fait accompli. The passage of time is clearly playing into the hands of the Russians. We are convinced that, after acquiring East Pakistan, they would let the Indians turn their might single-mindedly against West Pakistan for which they have already begun to equip the Indians.*

*As you know Pakistan has the will to defend itself but for this determination on our part to have any meaning, our supply lines must be kept open and adequate equipment to withstand the increasing Indian power should flow through them while there may still be time. The American assistance has to assume, without any further loss of time, meaningful dimensions. I am most grateful to you for what you are doing in getting some help reach us through third parties, but the volume of this assistance cannot possibly match the arms build-up by Russia in India. The American intervention in the situation does not only have to be credible but also tangible and meaningful. Time has come for the United States to go beyond warnings and demarches if its determination to punish aggression across*

*international borders is to have any effect on the Soviet Union and India. The Seventh Fleet does not only have to come to our shores but also to relieve certain pressures which we by ourselves are not in a position to cope with. In this connection, I have sent a specific proposal through General Raza about the role the Seventh Fleet could play at Karachi which, I hope, is receiving your attention.*

*Now that the Russians have been exposed and India stands isolated in the world community, I am sure that American public opinion will readily understand the measures that you take as intended to preserve the fabric of international law and order and to enable a sovereign state to survive against the aggressive onslaught of a neighbour several times its size and backed by a super power like the Soviet Union. I am convinced that the public opinion in Pakistan is ready and waiting for the adoption of such measures by the United States. The understanding we have reached is ready to develop immediately into an alliance. The perfidy in the subcontinent may not be the only move by the Soviet Union to counter. There are already reports that the Soviet Union is telling the Arabs about the futility of a United Nations with the sound implication that, in order to achieve their objectives, they too may have to resort to arms. This eventuality causes us considerable concern, because it is bound to erode the solid Arab support that we have enjoyed so far, apart from preempting the growth of favourable public opinion in Arab countries as a result of your timely support to Pakistan.*

*I am sure you will agree that time is of essence. We are paying a heavy price for each hour and I shall be anxiously waiting for your response.*

*With warm personal regards,*

*Agha Muhammad Yahya Khan  
H.P.K., H.J., General"*

(Ref: Document 298, Foreign Relations, 1969-1976, Vol XI, South Asia Crisis, 1971.)

### **Backchannel Message from Farland to Kissinger**

*When I returned home from seeing Yahya Khan this noon, he telephoned to say that while his instructions to Bhutto remained valid, in the event India insisted on pursuing the war. "I will have to have twenty B-57s*

*immediately."*

(Ref: Document 299, *Foreign Relations, 1969-1976, Vol XI, South Asia Crisis, 1971.*)

---

<sup>1</sup>DePalma, Samuel, assistant secretary of state for International Organisation Affairs.

<sup>2</sup>Bush, George H.W., Republican Congressman from Texas until January 1971; Permanent Representative to the United Nations, February 1971-January 1973.

<sup>3</sup>Scali, John, special consultant to the president, January 1971-January 1973.

<sup>4</sup>Zumwalt, Admiral Elmo R., Chief of Naval Operations.

<sup>5</sup>Rasgotra, Maharajakrishna, minister for Political Affairs of the Indian Embassy in the United States.

<sup>6</sup>Thant, U., secretary-general of the United Nations until December 1971.

<sup>7</sup>Raza, Major General Nawabzada Agha Mohammad, Pakistani Ambassador to the United States, November 1971-April 1972.

<sup>8</sup>Sultan Khan, Mohammad, Foreign Secretary of the Foreign Ministry of Pakistan until April 1972, thereafter Ambassador to the United States.

<sup>5</sup>Spivack, Herbert D., Consul General in Dacca, June 1971-September 1972

## **Chapter Four**

## **14 December (continued) Ceasefire Proposal Dhaka to State (Afternoon)**

### **"Subject: Niazi CeaseFire Proposal"**

*Lt. Gen. Niazi telephoned me at 1720 hours today to ask that I receive him urgently in my office. He appeared in company of Major General Rao Farman Ali and said that bombing of Dhaka city this afternoon had convinced him that the fighting must be stopped immediately to prevent further bloodshed, even though, he said, his troops were still in good positions and were not in danger at the moment.*

*General Farman Ali had in his possession a rough draft of a proposal he wished me to transmit to New Delhi so that it could be communicated through Indian channels to the Indian field commander in East Pakistan. After some discussion, the following proposal was drawn up in the form of a letter to me, signed by General Niazi and his signature attested by General Farman Ali:*

*"In order to save future loss of innocent human lives which would inevitably result from further hostilities in the major cities like Dhaka, I request you to arrange for an immediate ceasefire under the following conditions:*

- *Regrouping of Pakistan armed forces in designated areas to be mutually agreed upon between the commanders of the opposing forces;*
- *To guarantee the safety of all military and paramilitary forces;*
- *Safety of all those who had settled in East Pakistan since 1947;*
- *No reprisals against those who helped the administration since March 1971.*

*In those conditions, the Pakistan armed forces and paramilitary forces*

*would immediately cease all military operations. I would further abide by any resolutions which the Security Council of the United Nations may pass for the permanent settlement of the present dispute. I make this proposal with full authority vested in me by virtue of my position as Martial Law Administrator of Zone B (East Pakistan) and Commander Eastern Command exercising final authority over all Pakistan military and paramilitary forces in this area.*

*Niazi asked that I indicate in my transmittal message that he was prepared to name a representative immediately to discuss the details of his offer with an Indian counterpart, and he hoped that the Indian commander would do the same immediately, so that negotiations could begin at once.*

*Generals Niazi and Farman still wish to avoid use of word "surrender". You will note that Niazi states that he has full authority to take above action. When I questioned him specifically whether any concurrence was required by President Yahya Khan or anyone else in Islamabad, his reply was definitely "No".*

*Niazi will send his ADC to my office in about two hours from now, when he hopes some sort of reaction will be available. He is very anxious that some progress be made before daylight tomorrow, when he fears a resumption of bombing in Dhaka. In regard to Niazi's authority to act, I should also point out that Governor A.M. Malik has left the governor's house and has placed himself under the protection of the International Red Cross, thus abdicating any governmental function. General Farman Ali said that Malik had submitted a letter of resignation.*

*Spivack (US Counsel General in Dhaka)*

*(Ref: Document 300, Foreign Relations, 1969-1976, Vol XI, South Asia Crisis, 1971.)*

*(Farland informs State having met Yahya Khan who has agreed that the situation in the East was now hopeless, that humanitarian considerations would weigh and that "anything reasonable would be acceptable to him.")*

*(Ref: Document 301, Foreign Relations, 1969-1976, Vol XI, South Asia Crisis, 1971.)*

## **Wheels Within Wheels: Kissinger Shares His Mind with Haig**

*"The major objective should be to get a ceasefire resolution with vague political formula not mentioning Bangla Desh or East Pakistan. In this round we must make a record and get asked by Paks to do the political yielding. Make sure Paks keep Chinese informed and aboard. Put it hard to Vorontsov that vague formula is the bridge to our common objective on political side.*

*In the meantime texts of the Italian and British draft resolutions were transmitted to Kissinger on December 14:*

*"The British is a simple ceasefire on all fronts. The Italian still provides, in addition, for 'disengagement leading to the withdrawal of all their respective armed forces from the areas of conflict.' "The British tries to say enough about a political settlement to hint that it could be what the Indians want. The Italian provides for direct negotiations between the West and East Pakistanis without pre-conditions and could save some Pakistani dignity."*

*"The British sets up a UN special representative to help sort out political and humanitarian problems. The Italian leaves it to the locals."*

(Ref: Document 302, Foreign Relations, 1969-1976, Vol XI, South Asia Crisis, 1971.)

## **Haig Puts It On Record**

*"Dr Kissinger and the President were somewhat concerned that the Soviet note (received 3 am on 14 Dec) was vague and imprecise in several major respects. The most important of these was the reference to India's plans not to seize West Pakistani territory. It stated that this issue was one of the utmost importance to the United States Government and that it was our assumption that the message meant precisely what it said; i.e., that there would be absolutely no change in the existing territorial lines between Pakistan and India—in other words, that there would be a precise return to the status quo ante with respect to Pakistan's and India's territories. Mr Vorontsov stated that it was his personal understanding that this represented precisely the Soviet view.*

*...I pointed out that the fact that the U.S. side was greatly concerned by the*

*amount of time it took the Soviet Union to respond in detail on this issue following Mr Vorontsov's initial message of Sunday morning (December 12). I made the point that delays of this kind in times of crisis can only contribute to misunderstanding and a breakdown in confidence between the two governments. It can also result in the initiation of unilateral action by one party. ...I emphasized that Mr Vorontsov knew that conflicting interests involved in this situation were such that any acceptable formula...must be sufficiently vague so that all interested parties could support the formula. This would mean that the United States for its part would seek to insure that reference to political settlement be purposely vague."*

(Ref: Document 303, Foreign Relations, 1969-1976, Vol XI, South Asia Crisis, 1971.)

## **Department of State to Keating**

### **"Subj: Carrier Deployment in Indian Ocean.**

*Indian Ambassador Jha called at his request on Assistant Secretary Sisco to express GOI concern over reported US deployment of nuclear carrier in Indian Ocean for evacuation purposes. Ambassador accompanied by First Secretary Verma; Van Hollen, Schneider and Quainton present from NEA.*

*Jha said he wished to raise subject which has arisen out of his talks with Under Secretary Irwin. Under Secretary had, he said, informed him that helicopters had been pre-positioned in Thailand for evacuation purposes. Impression which he had received was that they were in Bangkok. However, subsequent reports indicate that helicopters were on nuclear-powered aircraft carrier, equipped with "all kinds of devices and gadgets." In earlier conversations Jha said he had tried to make clear that GOI anxious to help in evacuation of foreign personnel and had made every facility available for that purpose. GOI is as anxious as before to insure safety of personnel in Dhaka or their evacuation if necessary. In view of aircraft carrier report, GOI had instructed him to seek assurance from USG that there will be no evacuation operation without prior agreement with GOI or by force.*

*Sisco said he would report what Jha had said, but had nothing to add to December 13 statement by Secretary Laird regarding aircraft carrier. He said he would be back in touch if he had anything to add. Jha said he had*

*also a report from New Delhi that USG had some plan or intention to establish a beachhead in some part of Bangladesh for evacuation of US personnel or to facilitate transfer of Pakistani personnel to West Pakistan. Any such attempt would be a very serious matter and would endanger long-term Indo-US relations. ...In reply, Sisco said ... in view of Jha's mention of possible impact on bilateral relations, that, although he did not wish to go into past history, we do see in GOI's actions things which not only reflect present strains in our relations but also which obviously could have implications for our long-term relations, which both sides will be looking at in the future.*

*—Irwin Laird was asked in a press conference at the Pentagon on December 13 to comment on reports that the aircraft carrier Enterprise had been ordered to sail to the Indian Ocean. Laird responded that he made it a practice not to comment on operational orders, but he noted that the government had contingency plans to deal with situations involving evacuation and he implied that the movement of the carrier was connected with those plans."*

(Ref: Document 304, *Foreign Relations, 1969-1976, Vol XI, South Asia Crisis, 1971.*)

### **Kissinger Meets Vorontsov**

*Kissinger again met Vorontsov and told him:*

*He would like to summarize his understanding. This understanding was that:*

- *The Indians would not attack the West.*
- *The Indians would not seek to acquire Pakistan territory and would return to the territorial limits that existed prior to the crisis—in other words to a status quo ante.*

*Kissinger continued: Since Friday, (Dec. 10, 1971) President Nixon had been concerned that the Soviet leaders were not doing all possible to arrive at a settlement.*

*....President Nixon has long sought a genuine change in U.S./Soviet relations. Despite his desires, however, the Soviets proceed to equip India*

*with great amounts of sophisticated armaments. If the Soviet Government were to support or to pressure other foreign leaders to dismember or to divide an ally of the United States, how can the Soviet leaders expect progress in our mutual relationships? This is the source of the President's concern ...*

(Ref: Document 305, *Foreign Relations, 1969-1976, Vol XI, South Asia Crisis, 1971.*)

**15 DECEMBER 1971**

### **US Embassy in Dhaka to State**

*"I have been informed by Governor Malik and General Farman Ali that President Yahya Khan strongly desires to put a end to hostilities in EP (East Pakistan). For this purpose he wishes to arrange with the Indian Government an immediate ceasefire period of at least two hours in which discussions for this purpose can take place between the military commanders concerned. The President desires honorable conditions for Pakistani troops and protection of civilians.*

*Spivack"*

(Ref: Document 307, *Foreign Relations, 1969-1976, Vol XI, South Asia Crisis, 1971.*)

### **Keating to the Department of State**

*"I called on Haksar, Secretary to Prime Minister, at 1410 1ST, and handed him text of message from General Niazi (received from Dhalka) simultaneously passed copy to General Manekshaw, Chief of Army Staff. ... Haksar expressed appreciation, then asked where our overall relations had gone off the track. Haksar stated that all human affairs were transitory and he was not so much concerned about the present, as it would pass, as he was about the future. He expressed concern about the relations our children would have and what we owed to them. Haksar became quite*

*emotional, his eyes watering, and asked what we could do. I suggested a letter from Prime Minister to President might be in order. Haksar said he would draft such a letter that afternoon.*

*Keating"*

*(Ref: Document 308, Foreign Relations, 1969-1976, Vol XI, South Asia Crisis, 1971.)*

### **"Savages and Cannibals"**

*President Nixon met with Henry Kissinger in the Oval Office of the White House on the morning of December 15, 1971, to discuss the latest developments in the crisis in South Asia. Kissinger reported that "the Russians came in yesterday giving us their own guarantee that there would be no attack on West Pakistan." ...Kissinger continued: "Now it's done. It's just a question of what legal way we choose." Nixon said: "Well, what the UN does is really irrelevant." Kissinger felt that a solution to the crisis might be formalized in an exchange of letters between Nixon and Brezhnev that would be made public. Nixon asked how the Chinese would react to a public accommodation between the United States and the Soviet Union. Kissinger responded: "Oh, the Chinese would be thrilled if West Pakistan were guaranteed."*

*(Kissinger said Vorontsov had told him) " He said no annexation of West Pakistan territory as of now. Kissinger said: " Don't play any legalistic games with me. We consider the existing dividing line, and also that disputed territory cannot be taken. He said yes, that's the guarantee. So now it's just a question of how to formalize it." Kissinger considered the anticipated outcome to be "an absolute miracle." He said: "I have this whole file of intelligence reports which makes it unmistakably clear that the Indian strategy was to knock over West Pakistan."*

*Nixon and Kissinger were concerned about efforts made by Ambassador Jha to influence public opinion in the United States during the crisis. Kissinger said: "After this is over we ought to do something about that goddamned Indian Ambassador here going on television every day and attacking American policy." Nixon asked: "Why haven't we done something already?"*

*Kissinger responded: "I'd like to call State to call him in. He says he has unmistakable proof that we are planning a landing on the Bay of Bengal. Well that's OK with me. " Nixon agreed: "Yeah, that scares them." Kissinger added: "That carrier move is good." Nixon said: "Why hell yes...the point about the carrier move, we just say ...we got to be there for the purpose of their moving there. Look these people are savages." He added: "I want a word—put a word in for Scali to use... that the United Nations cannot survive and we cannot have a stable world if we allow one member of the United Nations to cannibalize another. Cannibalize, that's the word, I should have thought of it earlier. You see that really puts it to the Indians. It has, the connotation is savages. To cannibalize, and that's what the sons-of-bitches are up to." Kissinger interjected: "One thing we have done, if I may say so, rather well. We've put the Chinese into position where they're more eager to yield than we are."*

(Ref: Document 309, *Foreign Relations, 1969-1976, Vol XI, South Asia Crisis, 1971.*)

### **Memorandum from Kissinger to Nixon**

*"India-Pakistan Situation: The proposal of the Pakistani commander in Dhaka for a ceasefire was passed to Delhi last night, but we are aware of no Indian response yet (8:00 a.m.). Consultations on the UK-French draft Security Council resolution are scheduled to continue this morning. Foreign Minister Bhutto declined to pass General Niazi's ceasefire proposal to the Indians in New York, so our UN mission was instructed to communicate it to Foreign Minister Singh, and subsequently Ambassador Keating was instructed to pass its text to Mrs. Gandhi's secretary, Haksar. In this as in the negotiations on the Security Council resolution, Bhutto is apparently being careful to sidestep onus for the surrender of East Pakistan. Meanwhile, latest Indian reports indicate that Dhaka is receiving heavy artillery fire, and three Indian columns have advanced to within a few miles of Dhaka where they are preparing for attack.*

*Despite initially favorable reactions to the first UK draft Security Council resolution, positions on both sides hardened as they became aware of the rapid deterioration of the Pakistani military position in Dhaka.*

*The Indians are being tough on aspects of the transfer of East Pakistan*

*governmental functions to a new civilian government. They have submitted their own draft which includes the following: "Recognizes that simultaneously with the ceasefire in East Pakistan power shall be transferred to the representatives of the majority party elected in December 1970."*

(Ref: Document 310, *Foreign Relations, 1969-1976, Vol XI, South Asia Crisis, 1971.*)

### **Lynching by Frenzied Mobs Not to be Allowed: Keating to the Department of State—New Delhi, December 15, 1971**

*Haksar, Secretary to Prime Minister, called in DCM at 1800 hours local and handed him text of response from General Manekshaw to General Niazi.*

*Haksar said GOI was conveying response to Niazi through U.S. since we had been good enough to pass on original Niazi proposal. He described reply as a "carefully considered and sincere response" and called particular attention to cessation air attacks which took place at 1700 hours December 15.*

Text of message which GOI requests be transmitted urgently to Niazi is as follows:

*"For Lt. Gen. Niazi*

*From Sam Manekshaw, Chief of the Army Staff India. Firstly—I have received your communication reg. a ceasefire in Bangladesh at 1430 hours today through the American Embassy at New Delhi.*

*Secondly—I had previously informed General Farman Ali in two messages that I would guarantee*

- *the safety of all your military and paramilitary forces who surrender to me in Bangla Desh.*
- *Complete protection to foreign nationals, ethnic minorities and personnel of West Pakistan no matter who they may be. Since you have indicated your desire to stop fighting I expect you to issue orders to all forces under your command in Bangla Desh to cease fire immediately and surrender to my advancing forces wherever they are located.*

*Thirdly—I give you my solemn assurance that personnel who surrender shall be treated with the dignity and respect that soldiers are entitled to and I shall abide by the provisions of the Geneva Convention. Further as you have many wounded I shall ensure that they are well cared for and your dead given proper burial. No one need have any fear for their safety no matter where they come from. Nor shall there be any reprisals by forces operating under my command. Fourthly—Immediately I receive a positive response from you, I shall direct General Aurora, the commander of Indian and Bangla Desh forces in the Eastern theatre, to refrain from all air and ground action against your forces. As a token of my good faith I have ordered that no air action shall take place over Dacca from 1700 hours today. Fifthly—I assure you I have no desire to inflict unnecessary casualties on your troops as I abhor loss of human lives. Should however you do not comply with what I have stated you will leave me with no other alternative but to resume my offensive with the utmost vigour at 0900 hours Indian Standard Time on 16 December. (The message was passed to Gen Niazi simultaneously)*

(Ref: Document 311, Foreign Relations, 1969-1976, Vol XI, South Asia Crisis, 1971.)

### **Diplomacy on Fast Track: Kissinger Meets Vorontsov**

*"I met Vorontsov at my request to hand him a draft letter to Kosygin (attached) on the need to put an end to hostilities. Vorontsov said that I had to believe him that a major effort was being made to induce the Indians; however, they were not being very reasonable.*

*I said that there was no longer any excuse...*

*...Vorontsov said... The Soviet Union was prepared unconditionally to guarantee the United States that there would be no Indian attack on the Western front or on Kashmir, and that when they referred to West Pakistan they meant the existing dividing line. However, to do this publicly would mean that they were in effect speaking for a friendly country. After all, India was not a client state. I said that the course of events was obvious: Either there would be a ceasefire soon in the West anyway through the UN or through direct dealings with us, or else we would have to draw appropriate conclusions".*

## **A War, Yes; But a Conquest, No.**

### **Draft Letter from President Nixon to Soviet Chairman Kosygin**

"Dear Mr Chairman:

*Now that the military conflict in East Pakistan appears to be moving to a conclusion, the most challenging task to both our countries, as great and responsible powers, is to see to it that the bloodshed should promptly end and that fighting does not continue in the West. Although the United Nations has been seized with this difficult problem, efforts in that body have so far not resulted in progress, partly because of the difficulties of resolving political issues. It is not therefore urgently desirable that our two countries should take prompt and responsible steps to ensure that the military conflict does not spread and that assurances be given against territorial acquisition by either side? I know that you will agree with me that when this has been successfully accomplished the dark cloud that now hangs over the international situation as a whole will have been substantially lightened. I hope therefore that we can cooperate to achieve an end to all the fighting, to remove the concern that the war will become one of conquest, and to eliminate the threat to peace that has arisen. This would, of course, not prejudice anybody's position with respect to an ultimate political solution. I believe, that efforts in the above direction must continue to be vigorously pursued.*

*Sincerely,"*

*(Ref: Document 312, Foreign Relations, 1969-1976, Vol XI, South Asia Crisis, 1971.)*

### **An Indian stocktaking: Mrs Gandhi's letter to President Nixon 15 December 1971**

"Dear Mr President,

*I am writing at a moment of deep anguish at the unhappy turn which the relations between our two countries have taken. I am setting aside all pride,*

*prejudice and passion and trying, as calmly as I can, to analyse once again the origins of the tragedy which is being enacted.*

*There are moments in history when brooding tragedy and its dark shadows can be lightened by recalling great moments of the past. One such great moment which has inspired millions of people to die for liberty was the Declaration of Independence by the United States of America. That Declaration stated that whenever any form of Government becomes destructive of man's inalienable rights to life, liberty and pursuit of happiness, it was the right of the people to alter or abolish it.*

*All unprejudiced persons objectively surveying the grim events in Bangla Desh since March 25 have recognised the revolt of 75 million people, a people who were forced to the conclusion that neither their life, nor their liberty, to say nothing of the possibility of the pursuit of happiness, was available to them. The world press, radio and television have faithfully recorded the story. The most perceptive of American scholars who are knowledgeable about the affairs of this subcontinent revealed the anatomy of East Bengal's frustrations.*

*The tragic war, which is continuing, could have been averted if during the nine months prior to Pakistan's attack on us on December 3, the great leaders of the world had paid some attention to the fact of revolt, tried to see the reality of the situation and searched for a genuine basis for reconciliation. I wrote letters along these lines. I undertook a tour in quest of peace at a time when it was extremely difficult to leave, in the hope of presenting to some of the leaders of the world the situation as I saw it. It was heartbreaking to find that while there was sympathy for the poor refugees, the disease itself was ignored.*

*War could also have been avoided if the power, influence and authority of all the States and above all the United States, had got Sheikh Mujibur Rahman released. Instead, we were told that a civilian administration was being installed. Everyone knows that this civilian administration was a farce; today the farce has turned into a tragedy. Lip service was paid to the need for a political solution, but not a single worthwhile step was taken to bring this about. Instead, the rulers of West Pakistan went ahead holding farcical elections to seats which had been arbitrarily declared vacant.*

*There was not even a whisper that anyone from the outside world, had tried to have contact with Mujibur Rahman. Our earnest plea that Sheikh Mujibur Rahman should be released, or that, even if he were to be kept*

*under detention, contact with him might be established, was not considered practical on the ground that the US could not urge policies which might lead to the overthrow of President Yahya Khan. While the United States recognised that Mujibur Rehman was a core factor in the situation and that unquestionably in the long run Pakistan must acquiesce in the direction of greater autonomy for East Pakistan, arguments were advanced to demonstrate the fragility of the situation and of Yahya Khan's difficulty.*

*Mr President, may I ask you in all sincerity: Was the release or even secret negotiations with a single human being, namely, Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, more disastrous than the waging of a war? The fact of the matter is that the rulers of West Pakistan got away with the impression that they could do what they liked because no one, not even the United States, would choose to take a public position that while Pakistan's integrity was certainly sacrosanct, human rights, liberty were no less so and that there was a necessary inter-connection between the inviolability of States and the contentment of their people.*

*Mr President, despite the continued defiance by the rulers of Pakistan of the most elementary facts of life, we would still have tried our hardest to restrain the mounting pressure as we had for nine long months, and war could have been prevented had the rulers of Pakistan not launched a massive attack on us by bombing our airfields in Amritsar, Pathankot, Srinagar, Avantipur, Utterlai, Jodhpur, Ambala and Agra in the broad day light on December 3, 1971 at a time when I was away in Calcutta my colleague (sic), the Defence Minister, was in Patna and was due to leave further for Bangalore in the South and another senior colleague of mine, the Foreign Minister, was in Bombay. The fact that this initiative was taken at this particular time of our absence from the Capital showed perfidious intentions. In the face of this, could we simply sit back trusting that the rulers of Pakistan or those who were advising them, had peaceful, constructive and reasonable intent?*

*We are asked what we want. We seek nothing for ourselves. We do not want any territory of what was East Pakistan and now constitutes Bangla Desh. We do not want any territory of West Pakistan. We do want lasting peace with Pakistan. But will Pakistan give up its ceaseless and yet pointless agitation of the past 24 years over Kashmir? Are they willing to give up their hate campaign posture of perpetual hostility towards India? How many times in the last 24 years have my father and I offered a pact of non-*

*aggression to Pakistan? It is a matter of recorded history that each time such offer was made, Pakistan rejected it out of hand.*

*We are deeply hurt by the innuendos and insinuations that it was we who have precipitated the crisis and have in any way thwarted the emergence of solutions. I do not really know who is responsible for this calumny. During my visit to the United States, United Kingdom, France, Germany, Austria and Belgium the point I emphasized, publicly as well as privately, was the immediate need for a political settlement. We waited nine months for it. When Dr Kissinger came in August 1971, (it was actually in July). I had emphasized to him the importance of seeking an early political settlement. But we have not received, even to this day, the barest framework of a settlement which would take into account the facts as they are and not as we imagine them to be. Be that as it may, it is my earnest and sincere hope that with all the knowledge and deep understanding of human affairs you, as President of the United States and reflecting the will, the aspirations and idealism of the great American people, will at least let me know where precisely we have gone wrong before your representatives or spokesmen deal with us with such harshness of language.*

*With regards and best wishes,*

*Yours sincerely,*

*Indira Gandhi."*

(Ref: Document 314, Foreign Relations, 1969-1976, Vol XI, South Asia Crisis, 1971.)

## **Kissinger Telephones Nixon**

K: Now the Soviets have just told the British they would veto the British Resolution. If this plays out that way we may really have to ask ourselves what the Soviets are up to.

P: That could be. Although they just may have a very, very hot potato on their hands with the Indians.

K: All they (Soviets) promised is no attack on West Pakistan, but that does not include Kashmir. I talked to Maury Williams today who is in South Asia for AID and who is on the Indian side, but he said if Pakistan loses its part of Kashmir, it is really the end.

P: Well, the Indians have got to consider very seriously now; they may take

*this but if they do they will have...*

*K: We cannot turn around.*

*P: Well, let's just wait now. We have no choice but to just wait. It is in the Soviets hands. We can do nothing with the details.*

(Ref: Document 315, Foreign Relations, 1969-1976, Vol XI, South Asia Crisis, 1971.)

**16 DECEMBER, 1971**

### **"That Indian Cabinet Meeting Thing": Kissinger Talks to Nixon**

*K: Mr President.*

*P: On the India-Pakistan thing, Dhaka has surrendered and now the issue is...*

*K: Now, if in the next 24 hours the Indians don't agree to a ceasefire in the West we are in for it. Up until now it could be explained that Soviets wanted to wait until Dhaka had surrendered.*

*K: There are three possibilities: First, the British proposal carries; second, India-Pakistan ceasefire and third, the Indians continue the war until they smash the Pakistanis in Kashmir. Now we have had another appeal from the Pakistanis last night. Action is picking up in the West and they are asking for American planes, but we cannot even consider this. If this isn't settled by tomorrow night we will know the Russians have put it to us.*

*P: The one thing I am disappointed about, really feed off at is that you were unable to get out that Indian cabinet meeting thing. We have got to get it out.*

*K: We will do it.*

*P: I know there are a lot of pro-Indian people in State and who are trying to delay this. But I want it. We ought to be pressing the Indians every day. Now that Dhaka has fallen we have got to get that Ambassador in here and tell him the President is outraged about what he has done using our television and radio facilities to do it. Second, someone has got to say something about the Indian aid. The figure they have been using is not correct. I want a report. I want everything in it: PL-480, unilateral and multilateral assistance because some pressures have got to go. The Russians will only go as far as the Indians want to go. The Indians have got*

*to make a decision whether they want to be totally a Russian satellite or not. Also there have been these Indian cabinet meetings, we have to get reports on those.*

*K: Yes, Mr President.*

*P: If the Indians continue the course they are on we have even got to break diplomatic relations with them. Don't you agree, Henry?*

*K: I agree. There is already a strong victory statement and an unbelievable setback for the Chinese which is none of our business but they have certainly humiliated them.*

*P: And also let it be known they have done nothing.*

*K: That is right...we will have to reassess our position with the Russians. We will have until Saturday morning to see that.*

*P: Well, dropping the summit is not the first thing I would do.*

*K: Well, you have to look to see how much we are willing to pay in terms of where we are going.*

*P: To keep ourselves in perspective we have to realize the Russians have put it to us previously in other parts of the world so we have to just grin and bear it, right? K: But not you, Mr President.*

*P: My view is this: I won't let them do this. Did the Jordanians send planes.*

*K: Seventeen.*

*P: Cut off the Middle East talks, pour arms into Israel, discontinue our talks on SALT and the Economic Security Council can go [to] the public and tell them what the danger is. It is a risk group but the right one. It is pretty clear. I would go further. We have to stop our talks on trade, don't let Smith have any further things on the Middle East and stop seeing Dobrynin under any circumstances.*

*K: That is right. Break the White House channel.*

*P: And be very cold in our public statements toward them. What I am getting at is if we are prepared to go and have the card to play where we would not talk at all. Another thing I would beef up the Defence Budget plans then... I know the bigger game is the Russian game, but the Indians also have played us for squares here. They have done this once and when this is over they will come to us ask us to forgive and forget. This we must not do.*

(Ref: Document 316, Foreign Relations, 1969-1976, Vol XI, South Asia Crisis, 1971.)

## **Breaking News: Ceasefire Declared**

*Kissinger called Nixon again at 10:40 a.m. to tell him that India had declared a unilateral ceasefire in the west.*

*He said: "We have made it."*

*He credited the Soviet Union with exerting sufficient pressure on India to produce the desired result.*

*Nixon said: "If Soviets have cooperated on this I think we have got to play on an arms-length deal." He reiterated that there was to be no economic assistance for India in the budget that was being prepared.*

(Ref: Document 316, Foreign Relations, 1969-1976, Vol XI, South Asia Crisis, 1971.)

## **Indian Troops Enter Dhaka: Surrender Signed: Situation Report — Kissinger to Nixon**

*"India-Pakistan Situation: The Pak military commander in the East has transmitted through UN channels his acceptance of India's "surrender terms" and according to Indian press reports an agreement has been signed. Indian troops reportedly have already entered the city. Fairly heavy firing, however, has started in the streets of Dhaka, perhaps marking an uprising by the guerrillas who have been laying low in the capital city. The Pak forces are also destroying their POL and essential military supplies. In the West, land and air action was reported at several places, but there apparently are no important new gains by either side.*

*Diplomatic activity at the UN was intense yesterday.*

*Bhutto, nevertheless, insisted on a Security Council meeting after lunch, then, in a 40-minute emotional outburst, proceeded to castigate the Council's inability to act and to attack the Indians, Soviets, British and French before tearing up his papers and walking out. Mrs. Gandhi has sent you a long letter writing at a moment when, "at a moment of deep anguish at the unhappy turn which the relations between our two countries have taken," Mrs. Gandhi makes the following major points:*

- *The war could have been averted if the "great leaders of the world" had paid some attention to the "reality of the situation and searched for a genuine basis for reconciliation."*

- War could also have been avoided "if the power, influence and authority of all the states, and above all the United States, had got Sheikh Mujibur Rahman released." Instead, Mrs. Gandhi contends, India was told that a civilian administration was being installed which everyone knew was a "farce."
- "Lip service" was paid to the need for a practical political solution in East Pakistan, but "not a single worthwhile step was taken to bring this about."
- While the U.S. recognized that Mujibur Rehman was a core factor and the trend was toward greater autonomy for East Pakistan, arguments were advanced to demonstrate the fragility of the situation of Yahya Khan's difficulty. Was, she asks, the release or even secret negotiations with Mujibur Rehman more disastrous than waging war.
- The rulers of Pakistan got the impression they could do what they liked because no one, not even the U.S., would choose to take a public position that "while Pakistan's integrity was certainly sacrosanct, human rights and liberty were no less so."
- War could have still been prevented if Pakistan had not launched a "massive attack" on India. But India does "not want any territory of what was East Pakistan and now constitutes Bangla Desh." India also does "not want any territory of West Pakistan." India does want "lasting peace with Pakistan" but questions whether Pakistan will give up its "perpetual hostility" toward India.

*Mrs Gandhi closed by noting that India has been "deeply hurt by the innuendos and insinuations" that it had precipitated the crisis and had "thwarted the emergence of solutions." But, be that as it may, it is her "earnest and sincere" hope that you will "at least" let her know "where precisely they have gone wrong before your representatives or spokesmen deal with them with such harshness of language."*

*Our carrier task force is now east of Ceylon at the base of the Bay of Bengal. Our missions in India report that this move is generating considerable anti-American sentiment. The situation is particularly bad in Calcutta where the general mood is described as "angry". Our Consul General in Calcutta reports that unless suspicions of U.S. intervention are laid to rest there will be increasing hostility, and perhaps violence, directed at U.S. officials, installations and private citizens. There have been demonstrations at our embassy in New Delhi and the consulate in*

*Bombay."*

(Ref: Document 319, *Foreign Relations, 1969-1976, Vol XI, South Asia Crisis, 1971.*)

## An Announcement

*On December 16, 1971, at 2:30 p.m. local time in New Delhi, Prime Minister Gandhi announced to the Lok Sabha that the Pakistani forces commanded by General Niazi had surrendered unconditionally an hour earlier in Dhaka. She hailed Dhaka as "the free capital of a free country." At the same time, the Indian Government announced a ceasefire on the front between India and West Pakistan to take effect the following day. In making the announcement a government spokesman stated that India had no territorial ambitions in the conflict. The announcement concluded that India expected there would be a "corresponding immediate response" from Pakistan.*

(Ref: Document 320, *Foreign Relations, 1969-1976, Vol XI, South Asia Crisis, 1971.*)

**17 DECEMBER 1971**

## Peeved Yesterday, a Sigh of Relief Today: Kissinger and Nixon Talk

K: Mr President.

P: Hello, Henry, what's the topic today?

K: It looks like we are in business. The Paks have accepted the Indian ceasefire offer.

P: Does that mean she (Mrs. Gandhi) won't break it? K: Well, she has no pretext to break it. Oh, they are bringing me in a flash cable. The Ceylonese wants us to put some of our ships in the Indian Ocean into Colombo.

P: Yes, I think that is a good point. Now at the present time the Paks are satisfied, the Chinese are satisfied and the Russians. That is fine.

K: We have come out of this amazingly well and we scared the pants off the Russians. One shouldn't give somebody who drops a match into a fire credit for calling the fire department. We have to let them know this was not a war

*just between India and Pakistan.*

*P: I think you ought to make the point very strongly that if we hadn't used our influence as strongly as possible, it never would have come out the way it did.*

*K: Well, that is a good point and also that it would have had a very serious impact if the Soviet Union had...*

*P: And in other parts of the world it would have been resisted.*

*K: Your whole strategy from the beginning was to bring about what in fact we did. There are many who heard me talk about this last week.*

*P: That is right so they are prepared for it.*

(Ref: Document 324, *Foreign Relations, 1969-1976, Vol XI, South Asia Crisis, 1971.*)

## **Chapter Five**

## **Aftermath**

### **At the United Nations: 18 December 1971**

*U.S./Japanese draft which:*

- *demands that a durable ceasefire be observed until disengagement takes place leading to "prompt withdrawal of the armed forces from all the occupied territories";*
- *calls on all members to refrain from aggravating the situation;*
- *calls for protection of civilians and soldiers;*
- *calls for international assistance in the relief, return and rehabilitation of the refugees and strengthening the UN staff to assist.*

*Indian Foreign Minister Swaran Singh said:*

*In the east India planned to install a civilian government of officials elected in 1970. He asked whether the U.S. could get Mujibur Rehman released to head it, but he did not press the point. The Indian army will stay in the barracks. India is not interested in occupation but cannot withdraw under present conditions and leave chaos behind. India will withdraw as soon as practicable and wished the UN resolution to reflect the need for flexibility in timing.*

Ref: Document 325, Foreign Relations, 1969-1976, Vol XI, South Asia Crisis, 1971

**Nixon Confirms that US Did the Best it Could:  
President Nixon to Indian Prime Minister Gandhi**

"Washington, December 18, 1971.

Dear Madame Prime Minister:

*I have received your letter of December 15, 1971, in which you seek to place the responsibility for the war in the subcontinent on others and in particular the United States. In the light of the many exchanges over the past year it cannot surprise you that I reject this view. I will write you soon at greater length in confidential channels where this discussion belongs. But I cannot let your statement that "not a single worthwhile step" was taken to bring about a political solution remain without response on the public record. It is a matter of judgment what is "worthwhile." The U.S. made efforts extending for nine months to take steps to assist the refugees and to provide the worthwhile basis for political negotiation.*

*When we met in Washington you were assured of our intention to continue to carry the main financial burden for care of the refugees. You were informed of the Government of Pakistan's willingness to take the first step of military disengagement if it could be assured that India would reciprocate subsequently. You were also informed of various ways which could be used to get talks started between the Government of Pakistan and Bangla Desh representatives. We asked your Ambassador to work out with us a specific timetable for political evolution. You said that India wanted a peaceful solution. We accepted this statement at face value.*

*We never made any claims that our proposals met India's position fully. They were proposals which would have started the process of negotiations. I had thought that this was one of those times when statesmanship could turn the course of history away from war. If there is a strain in our relations, and there is, it is because your government spurned these proposals and without any warning whatever chose war instead. The subsequent disregard by your government of repeated calls of the United Nations for ceasefire and withdrawal—adopted by overwhelming majorities—confirms this judgment.*

*The stand taken by the United States in recent days has not been taken against India. It has been taken against the practice of turning to military action before all political resources are exhausted. We recognize that India is a major Asian power and that we share the common values of genuinely democratic government. No act has been taken with a desire to damage the*

*relationship between our two great countries. We would hope that the day may come when we can work together for the stability of Asia, and we deeply regret that the developments of the past few months in South Asia have thrust the day of stability farther into the future.*

*Sincerely,*

*Richard Nixon"*

*Ref: Document 326, Foreign Relations, 1969-1976, Vol XI, South Asia Crisis, 1971.)*

### **Bhutto Calls on US Ambassador**

Bhutto returned to Islamabad and on the 19th—the second day of widespread anti-Yahya Khan demonstrations critical of his handling of the crisis all over Pakistan, President Yahya Khan resigned in Bhutto's favour who now assumed charge as Pakistan's new president and chief martial law administrator. The first foreign diplomat he called to see him was the American Ambassador Farland, indicative of his personal high regard, and his "deep appreciation" for the cordiality shown him in Washington and New York. "We are in a hell of a mess," he told Farland who agreed that Bhutto's job was not an enviable one. Bhutto went on in a 'solemn and measured tone' to tell him that "Pakistan had a real reason for coming into being; that this very reason justified its survival". He said that he trusted "with all my heart" that the US would do all within its capacity to assist in the monumental effort which lay ahead. Farland assured him in the affirmative.

Bhutto told Farland that he would soon be going to Peking as "China had not fulfilled its obligations to Pakistan as promised". On the contrary, he was effusive in his appreciation of the assistance rendered by the US, with specific reference to the period 3 December to date. Ironically, he also spoke on the theme of unity between the two wings, not having done much to consolidate it in the first place. "Can the two wings even yet be held together?" he asked. Farland told him that his conversations with Bengalees indicated that "religiously and historically the bond was strong", but that the events which had caused "strains" from 1947 onwards and the untoward happenings of 25 March and subsequent thereto were matters which he (Bhutto) as a Pakistani and a Muslim could best

judge.

Farland tactfully asked Bhutto whether he wanted to release Mujibur Rehman. Bhutto answered with a "yes", but warned that the release of Mujibur Rehman at that time would "Tentamount to Bhutto decreeing his own imprisonment." He therefore planned to first "condition" the people of Pakistan to the need to release Mujibur Rehman. He anticipated that Mujibur Rehman might be exchanged for the thousands of Pakistani prisoners India held following the surrender in East Pakistan.

Bhutto assured Farland that he would be available to him at any time and at any hour. Next morning's news showed that Yahya Khan had been "retired" along with several senior officers and Lt. Gen. Gul Hassan named the new Commander-in-Chief of the Army.

### **Bhutto Addresses "his people"**

Bhutto spoke to 'his people' on radio saying, "*East Pakistan is an indissolvable part of Pakistan*"; and that he was prepared for talks with East Pakistan leaders for a "*loose arrangement*" (to stay together), but that first "*Indian troops must vacate my motherland... and East Pakistan.*" He again revealed that he might soon travel to Peking since "*China had not fulfilled its obligations to Pakistan as promised.*"

(Ref: Document 329, *Foreign Relations, 1969-1976, Vol XI, South Asia Crisis, 1971.*)

### **Dhaka Situation**

In the meantime, reports from Dhaka suggested a fluid situation with the Indian Army restoring law and order and reorganising the administrative apparatus. The Bangladesh "Prime Minister" was quoted by Dhaka radio as saying that there was a great need for foreign aid but that they will "*not touch*" any part of US aid because of the "*hateful and shameful*" policy that the US had followed towards the Bangladesh "*freedom struggle.*"

(Ref: Document 329, *Foreign Relations, 1969-1976, Vol XI, South Asia Crisis, 1971.*)

## **Bhutto has 'heavy heart', Tells Nixon**

On 20 December Bhutto wrote a letter to President Nixon saying he was writing with a "heavy heart" that the situation in Dhaka was "grim". He alleged inhuman atrocities and mass murders of innocent people in a "part of Pakistan which is under Indian occupation now, "and held India as directly responsible since Mukti Bahini had been placed under Indian command. He appealed to the US to use its influence with India "most urgently" to prevent further carnage, otherwise "that Province might soon be engulfed in a bloodbath."

## **Bhutto Calls on US Ambassador (again)**

*On 22 December afternoon Ambassador Farland got a message " if he could receive the President at his residence in the evening." Bhutto arrived at 2130 hours saying his action was "strongly to signal new period of relations" between GOP and USG. He expressed the need for influx of foreign capital to enable Pakistan to rise from its "present destitute economic straits." The discussion covered many subjects of mutual interest and concern, among them the talk of Yahya Khan's" Trial", with Bhutto clarifying that he was not keen on this but had to allow people's passions to cool.*

(Nixon was soon to have him sent an immediate communication in response indicating how very upset he would be at the prospects of such a trial).

*(Ref: Document 333, Foreign Relations, 1969-1976, Vol XI, South Asia Crisis, 1971.)*

## **US-China-Pakistan Equation**

*Bhutto said he was "convinced that it was not only India's desire to break the two-wing concept but also India's definite intention (till time of ceasefire) to liquidate Pakistan." India, he said had "never truly recognized the 1947 partition, nor, in fact, had been reconciled to it." Consequently, he said significantly, "the future of Pakistan was closely tied to two great powers: China and the United States." He, however, criticized Security Council's "ineptitude".*

*Referring to his role as Chief Martial Law Administrator, Bhutto said he wanted to establish a thoroughly political government as soon as possible, and made numerous references to the need for the people to become a part of the*

*political climate of Pakistan "otherwise there would be no peace here, ever."*

(Ref: Document 333, *Foreign Relations, 1969-1976, Vol XI, South Asia Crisis, 1971.*)

## AFTERWARDS—AN AFTERWORD

"The surrender ceremony at Race course Ground Dhaka on this day should have left a lasting impression on our minds about the[Chapter15](#) need to respect constitutional norms because not respecting them, or rather not having any norms to respect, is what led to Pakistan's December tragedy in the first place. But if we look back at the last 34 years, our most spectacular flouting, our most flagrant disrespect, has been reserved for the Constitution framed in the aftermath of the 71 war. This doesn't say much for our learning capability." (A Pakistani commentator, 2005)

### 18 December 1971

During the US-UK talks at Bermuda the president asked for the British judgment as to whether, if this Chinese danger arose, the Indians would try to get help from them or the Soviets, or both. He noted the sentiment in the (US) Congress and elsewhere that their considerable aid to India in the past twenty-five years—a total of some ten billion dollars—had only them being kicked in the teeth. The question was being asked whether such aid was in the United States' interest if we remained totally without any influence. The argument was made that such money could be used better at home.

*Sir Alec Douglas-Home, the British premier, said we had to assume that there would be no gratitude on the part of Indian politicians. India, however, would not want to be totally dependent on the USSR. It was worth keeping those contacts with India which we enjoyed, and he thought the Indians would want this. It was for this reason that the British had found the apparent US attitude during the past month worrying. He thought enough good will remained in India to enable the United States to recover its position. The Secretary commented that Mrs. Gandhi resents our even mentioning aid as a factor in our relations. The Congress simply would not approve any program under these circumstances. Sir Alec asked whether*

*anyone ever thanked, the United States for its aid. The Secretary said not all countries had acted as had the Indians. "We hoped", of course, that the United States could recapture some of its influence with India, he said.*

*(Ref: Document 331, Foreign Relations, 1969-1976, Vol XI, South Asia Crisis, 1971.)*

## **Chapter Six**

## Bangladesh Now

**B**ANGLADESH, THE THIRD LARGEST MUSLIM COUNTRY, ONE OF THE poorest, amongst the mostly densely populated nations was born in the bloody wake of a genocide; its strength then, as earlier, was language-born nationalism, and of course, always in the backdrop there remained the sustaining strength of Islam.

Mujibur-Rehman, having led this revolution, clearly then the tallest and the most popular leader, became Bangladesh's first Prime Minister. He got a new Constitution, modelled on the Indian Constitution, adopted on 4 November 1972. The constitution had within its perview the four pillars of 'nationalism, socialism, secularism and democracy'.

The country, that Mujib got the premier-ship of was scarred by civil war. On account of the obligation to repay those who participated in the struggle for Independence, the Bangladesh government granted many of them appointments in its civil and military departments. This deprived Mujib the professionalism of many officers formerly in Pakistan Civil Service, an asset that he surely needed then.

In Bangladesh, despite substantial foreign aid food supply remained unsatisfactory and Prime Minister Mujib's economic policies did not work, they simply could not, primarily because they were so unsustainably doctrinaire. In consequence the country began to drift. Compulsory use of Bengali language, politically a must, as a replacement for English added to difficulties, further isolating this new country. Widespread famine followed, causing great hardship and adversely affecting Mujib's popularity. Also, the alliance with India became a convenient tool with which the Mujibur-Rehman was beaten with. As discontent mounted, the government reacted by a matching intolerance. Unable

to gain an insight/learn a lesson from what he had himself witnessed, also personally experienced while a part of Pakistan, Sheikh Mujibur-Rehman, rapidly descended into greater and greater intolerance. Sadly, he then struck a blow to his great achievements in just one fatal misstep.

Mujib proclaimed Bangladesh as a 'one party' state, effectively wiping, eliminating all opposition political parties, abolishing the parliamentary system. He renamed the Awami League as Bangladesh Workers & Peasants Awami League and required all civilian government personnel to join this party. The fundamental rights enumerated in the Constitution ceased to be law. One of the pillars of the country had been removed. Bangladesh, still in its infancy, became a personal dictatorship.

There is an old truism about coups-de-etat: 'Don't count on it's success until the counter-coup has failed'. Sheikh Mujib's coup was countered by General Ziaur-Rehman's, Sheikh Mujibur Rehman was assassinated. The general with the backing of the military, appointed himself as the chief martial law administrator; this was in November 1976. Ziaur-Rehman immediately adopted 'populism' as policy resorting to whatever Union public acclaim. Amongst the steps that he took was to change the 'secular' emphasis of the government. While distancing Bangladesh from India, Zia sought to improve ties with other Islamic nations. His rule, too, ended in his assassination in 1981, when Vice President Sattar became the acting president. But Sattar's principal shortcoming, that he was a 'civilian', soon caused the end of his regime, too.

This time it was General Ershad, who in March 1982, dismissed Sattar, dissolved the Cabinet and the Parliament and assumed full powers, again under martial law. Though initially Bangladesh had opted for a 'secular nationalist ideology' as embodied in its constitution, the principle of secularism was subsequently replaced by commitment to Islamic way of life. This was done through a series of constitutional amendments and government proclamations, between 1977 and 1988. Ershad's martial law lasted till November 1986. Since major political forces in Bangladesh could not, at that stage, cooperate, there emerged no resistance to Ershad's takeover. The martial law deprived the Supreme Court of its jurisdiction over the protection of the fundamental rights. Hundreds of politicians were jailed on various charges, and those convicted of 'political crime' then had no right of appeal either.

By the fall of 1987, the two major opposition parties of Bangladesh, the Bangladesh Nationalist Party and the Awami League, signalled a phase of cooperation. In April 1988, Ershad lifted the emergency and convened the

Parliament. In his opening speech to Parliament, he advocated Islam as the state religion. This also brought his (Ershad's Jatiyo Party) party's position closer to that of BNP, Jamaat-i-Islami and smaller fundamentalist parties. In June 1988 the Parliament, dominated by his Jatiyo Party passed the Eighth Amendment to the Constitution, making 'Islam the state religion'.

A salient feature of Bangladeshi politics has been the drive towards the concentration of power in a single party, headed by a strong executive. This process began in 1975 with Mujib and his Awami League; General Zia-ur-Rehman formed his own BNP; General Ershad's regime followed Zia-ur-Rehman's model, martial law succeeded by the formation of a centrist party—the Jatiyo Party—and the orchestration of a civilian government supporting a strong executive. Each time a new national party came to power, it banished the opposition into being an 'illegal' entity. Though, the party in power periodically did offer attractive government posts to opposition leaders in return for their neutrality; the price of silence lay then in comfort of government positions.

Military support had also been a crucial component of the success of the national parties, by now Bangladesh Military, as in Pakistan was a part of the political processes of the country. It was difficult to predict the actions of the military in the 1970s, since it was torn by its own internal divisions. It was General Zia-ur-Rehman who had then moved to stabilise this 'vital organ' of the State. This strong trend under Zia and Ershad drew the Army away from the Awami League, the then Soviet Union, decreased communist and Maoist influence; all these clearly significant factors played important role, during the 1970s, in this country.

An important Islamic party during the 1980 was the Jamat-I-Islami. This party was temporarily banned in the 1970s, because of its opposition to independence but it returned in the 1980s as the premier Islamic party among the opposition. Jamat-I-Islami called for a theocracy, not this 'western style (theocratic) democracy', but it simultaneously advocated the resignation of General Ershad and a restoration of democracy; not finding any contradiction in this twin policy plank. The party drew much of its strength from dedicated bands of 'madrassa' students and graduates as well as various Darul Ulooms renowned religions and academic centres in the Islamic world. Its militant student front—called the "Islamic Chattro Shibir" was as close to a private armed force as a political organisation can get.

Strains of religious politics had become visible even during the tenure of Mujib, this increased significantly during the Zia era and then gained complete

ascendancy after Ershad came to power. It was the Ershad regime that completed the Islamisation process through the Eighth Constitutional Amendment (June 1988). State patronage to Islamic fundamentalism increased as evident from the proliferation of religious parties; further reorganisation and strengthening of the Jammat, whose main support base was amongst students and also more significantly, there now emerged a strong nexus between the armed forces, religious groups and political parties.

What is noteworthy in the evolution of parliamentary democracy in Bangladesh is the 'legitimisation' of Jamaat-i-Islami. It held the key portfolios of agriculture and social welfare, in the BNP led government emphasising its importance in a predominantly agricultural country. Post 9/11, Jamaat adopted the mantle of the saviour of Islam. In a quiet takeover, a majority of the mosques in Bangladesh are now with the Jamaat. Its inclusion in the government has strengthened other more extreme fundamentalist groups like HUJI, and the linkages of the HUJI with banned Islamic militant outfits like JeM, LeT, are all well established and on the path of progressive ascendance.

It is in this backdrop of events, once again, that concerns mount in India, as also in the wider international community, that the graph of Islamic fundamentalist activities within Bangladesh is rising again; also as to how Bangladesh is the current favoured shelter for terrorists and insurgents; also as to how tenuous the situation within Bangladesh actually is; could it spiral out of control? Again? This is the Bangladesh sharing a porous border with India.

It is significant that religious bigotry and radicalism have spread predominantly in rural Bangladesh, less so in the centres of urban population which, given the lack of employment opportunities, is a significant detail. Besides, happenings in rural areas usually do not attract much media attention, thereby permitting a greater leeway of action. Notwithstanding this rather forbidding reality, there exists an unusually sharp disinclination within Bangladesh to even acknowledge that Islamic fundamentalism, terrorism and its various other ancillaries have already struck root in the country. This, in part is understandable escapism but only upto a point. For unless the country that becomes, or is made into a source of terrorism, acknowledges that the ailment exists, no corrective measures can emerge, leave alone being applied.

The other significant aspects of the rise of Islamic fundamentalism in Bangladesh have been: First, that major anti-Awami League players like the Bangladesh Army and the Bangladesh Nationalist Party have actively and openly sought the help of the fundamentalist forces. Second, the Jamait-i-Islami,

a hand-maiden of the Pakistani Army during 1971, now shares power in the government. Despite their growing strength, Islamic fundamentalists, however, prefer to continue their work from behind shadowy fronts via obscure and often unfamiliar organisations.

The growth of Islamic fundamentalism in Bangladesh has also been fuelled by the role of 'madrassas', which today number over 64,000, are all government supported, therefore, also government controlled. While these government controlled 'madrassas' do prepare students in some modern subjects, the 'Deobandi variety' continue with only the traditional. These 'Deobandi Madrassas' generally attract students from poorer families, thus eminently qualifying as 'recruitment centers' for Islamic fundamentalist groups. They also advocate an even more "purer" form of Islam.

A continuing and persistent persecution of religious minorities, violation of human rights of those who actively fight fundamentalism, must also be taken account of. Hindus now constitute just 9% of the total population; when they accounted for 28% of the population of East Bengal at partition, (on the basis of the 1941 census). Illegal migration, infiltration and mass emigration of persons from East Pakistan, later Bangladesh in to India has been continuous, it has been substantial and is a major concern to India. The only time when a Bangladeshi leader has admitted to that such a problem exists, has been during Prime Minister Khalida Zia's visit to India, in 1992.

This issue has potentially serious domestic repercussions in India. It first acquired political significance with the agitation of the All Assam Student's Union in the mid 1970s and early 1980s against this acquiescent policy of successive state and central governments in allowing Bangladeshis to enter India, that even only to increase the number of votes for the Congress party! The 1981 census showed an unnatural increase in the populations of West Bengal, Assam and Tripura; three times the national average with the growth in Muslim population being particularly high. This is a sensitive and an extremely volatile issue.

## **Bangladesh-India Relations**

Bangladesh, very much born of the same womb, that of the partition, has moved well past the gratitude phase of bi-lateral relations with India. The "heart of the two nation theory" beats strongest in Bangladesh now. That is why for India to expect a 'secular and grateful' Bangladesh is totally unrealistic; this runs totally

counter to the trend of its entire history. Because the cultural mosaic of India so deeply pervades the whole of South Asia, a strong and reactionary tendency has developed among India's neighbours, asserting an exaggerated and unnatural separateness of identity. This often manifests through adopting contrasting ideology platforms only to demonstrate distance from India; also in loud public refusals to settle issues even though on terms that are clearly reasonable and are in the national interest of the country concerned. That is why Bangladesh oscillates between the poles of 'secularism' and 'Islam'; between Bengali and Bangladeshi; between the so-called 'forces of 1971' and those of 1947' pro and anti-India.

Perceptions have differed on the issues of 'liberation' of Bangladesh. For India it is ingratitude, this Bangladeshi denial of India's role in its independence, whereas for Bangladesh, the liberation war having reduced the security threat to India is enough to recompense, how can permanent gratitude be even expected? This mismatch of imagined or real expectations, imagined ingratitude, a basket of imagined and imaginary wrongs further complicates the situation. "Never remind about a favour done; never forget about a favour received" often resonates as a vignette.

India's view that terrorist groups, largely those that target India, get support in Bangladesh and that the Bangladeshi government has done much less than it could have to control them, is not taken seriously and Bangladesh leaders, in response, raise only the level of their rhetoric. Also, in Bangladesh, it is the armed forces, that have control over matters of operations concerning 'terrorist activities'. For the last three decades, the Bangladeshi armed forces have been kept reasonably well funded and equipped, by successive governments, justification for this not being incipient or real terrorism but perceptions about an 'Indian threat'. This 'enemy' image, now attached to India, has inevitably acquired a political value quotient, it helps the armed forces of Bangladesh to stay in power.

The domestic and foreign policies of the South Asian countries often enmesh. Initiatives like trade with Nepal or a sharing of Ganga waters with Bangladesh become political issues. Another political reality is the gradual shift of focus from the Centre to the States in India and the interest of these States. This comes in to play vitally when decisions are to be made internationally with the bordering neighbours. This sadly, though inevitably localises foreign affairs. That is why sharing of Ganga waters remained one such issue, almost entirely a consequence these differences, in perception. Convergence of domestic politics

with foreign affairs currently gets demonstrated in South Asia, on almost a daily basis.

An aspect that is resented by Bangladesh is its trade deficit with India. Bangladesh being India's sixth largest customer, must take note of the illegal trade that exists across the borders. This is one unavoidable consequence of illegal 'immigration'. That is why this issue of 'Trade with India' has acquired such a sharp political profile in Bangladesh, with the main political parties accusing each other of having 'sold out' the economy to India.

Bangladeshi nationalism has long replaced Bengali nationalism of the pre and post liberation period. Bengali language, too, has now undergone a major interpolation of the Arabic, a trend that has its own dynamics for the future of this country, also indeed the region.

The seeds of virulent fundamentalism and terrorism in Bangladesh have begun to sprout.

Another issue of mutual concern is the Farakka barrage which was created at Farakka (India) in 1975, just when a new government had assumed control in Bangladesh. Bangladesh had wanted the historic flows to continue with no diversion through this barrage. Because of mutual distrust, no agreement was reached in 1976 or 1977 on how the Ganga water was to be shared. After 1977, with a new government in India, a five-year agreement was formed with a 'minimum guarantee' clause. During the time when Indira Gandhi and Rajiv Gandhi were in power, there were no agreements or 'minimum guarantee' clause. The absence of agreement was used by Bangladesh leaders to consolidate their positions by attacking India on this issue. The matter was referred by Bangladesh to the UN and an attempt was also made to bring in China to mediate.

The commissioning of Farakka had helped in realistic assessment of the needs of the two countries. The problem was only confined to thirty days in a year and also that there would be no real problem if the flushing of Calcutta Port did not take place for those thirty days. It was ascertained that the real need of Bangladesh was considerably smaller.

A change in government in Delhi also made for a change in relations with Bangladesh. The 'Desai' era (1977-79) in India was marked by a remarkable improvement in India-Bangladesh relations. Similarly, the agreement of 1996 was signed when I.K. Gujral became the foreign minister under a non-congress government. In June 1996, Sheikh Hasina Wajed had become the prime minister of Bangladesh. Six months of negotiations were now, therefore, sufficient to

arrive at an agreement between Bangladesh and India over Ganga waters.

A change in the government in Delhi also made for a change in relations with Bangladesh. The 'Desai' era (1977-79) in India was marked by a remarkable improvement in Indo-Bangladesh relation. Similarly, the agreement of 1996 was signed when I.K. Gujral became the foreign minister under a non-congress government. In June 1996, Sheikh Hasina Wajed became the prime minister of Bangladesh. Six months of negotiations were now, therefore, sufficient to arrive at an agreement between Bangladesh and India over Ganga waters.<sup>1</sup> There was a qualitative advancement in the Indo-Bangladesh relations with the NDA Government at the centre during the period 1998-2004. Since then, Indo-Bangladesh relations appear to be marking time, watching anxiously events beyond the horizon.

It is difficult to say where all this will lead to as we have now reached a stage in Bangladesh where the country is again being ruled by a quasi-military government, the fourth one, at that, in this young country's life. The tender sapling of democracy, to which after the Bangladesh owes its very creation and existence as an independent country, has not been permitted to take root even in this incomparably fertile, deltoid land of the great river system of the Indian subcontinent. Even more tragically and ominously Bangladesh has now become the new, though yet unrecognised, epicentre of Islamic fundamentalism and explosive terrorism.

---

<sup>1</sup> *Ganges Water Sharing Treaty* between the Government of the Peoples Republic of Bangladesh and the Government of the Republic of India on sharing of the Ganga/Ganges waters at Farakka was signed by the two prime ministers on 12 December 1996. The treaty sets out the following arrangement for sharing between Bangladesh and India the dry season flow of the Ganges at Farakka by ten-day periods from 1 January to 31 May every year.

## **Appendix-I**

### **Presidents of Pakistan**

No.	Name	Took Office	Left Office	Political Party
01	Dr Iskander Mirza	March 23 1956	October 27 1958	Republican Party
02	Muhammad Ayub Khan	October 27 1958	March 25 1969	Military
03	Yahya Khan	March 25 1969	December 20 1971	Military
04	Zulfikar Ali Bhutto	December 20 1971	August 13 1973	Pakistan People's Party
05	Fazal Ilahi Chaudhry	August 13 1973	September 16 1978	Pakistan People's Party
06	Muhammad Zia-ul-Haq	September 16 1978	August 17 1988	Military
07	Ghulam Ishaq Khan	August 17 1988	July 18 1993	No Party
08	Wasim Sajjad	July 18 1993	November 14 1993	Pakistan Muslim League (N)
09	Farooq Leghari	November 14 1993	December 2 1997	Pakistan People's Party
10	Wasim Sajjad	December 2 1997	January 1 1998	Pakistan Muslim League (N)
11	Muhammad Rafiq Tarar	January 1 1998	June 20, 2001	Pakistan Muslim League (N)
12	Pervez Musharraf	June 20, 2001	In Office	Military

### **Prime Ministers of Pakistan**

Sl.No.	Name	Took Office	Left Office
01	Liaquat Ali Khan	August 14 1947	October 16 1951
02	Khawaja Nazimuddin	October 17 1951	April 17 1953
03	Muhammad Ali Bogra	April 17 1953	August 12 1955
04	Chaudhry Muhammad Ali	August 12 1955	September 12 1956
05	Huseyn Shaheed Suhrawardy	September 12 1956	October 15 1957
06	Ibrahim Ismail Chundrigar	October 17 1957	December 16 1957
07	Sir Feroz Khan Noon	December 16 1957	October 7 1958
08	Mohammad Ayub Khan	October 7 1958	24 October 1958

From 1958 until 1973, no person held the title of Prime Minister due to martial law. However, Nurul Amin held the office in December 1971 only for thirteen days.

09	Nurul Amin	December 7 1971	December 20 1971
10	Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto	August 14 1973	July 5 1977

The office was again suspended from July 5 1977 until March 24 1985 due to martial law.

11	Mohammad Zia-ul-Haq (Chief martial law administrator)	July 5 1977	March 24 1985
12	Muhammad Khan Junejo	March 24 1985	May 29 1988
	Mohammad Zia-ul-Haq (again)	June 9 1988	August 17 1988
13	Benazir Bhutto	December 2 1988	August 6 1990
14	Ghulam Mustafa Jatoi	August 6 1990	November 6 1990
15	Nawaz Sharif	November 6 1990	April 18 1993
16	Balakh Sher Mazari (Restored) Nawaz Sharif	April 18 1993	May 26 1993
17	Moin Qureshi (Again) Benazir Bhutto	May 26 1993	July 18 1993
18	October 19 1993	October 19 1993	October 19 1993
	Miraj Khalid (interim)	November 5 1996	November 5 1996
	(Again) Nawaz Sharif	February 17 1997	February 17 1997
		February 17 1997	October 12 1999

On October 12 1999, Pervez Musharraf overthrew Nawaz Sharif, and took the title of Chief Executive. On June 20 2001, he was made the President of Pakistan.

19	Pervez Musharraf	October 12 1999	November 23 2002
----	------------------	-----------------	------------------

Elections were held on October 10, 2002 leading to the return of the position of Prime Minister.

20	Zafarullah Khan Jamali	November 21 2002	June 26 2004
21	Chaudhry Shujaat Hussain	June 30 2004	August 28 2004
22	Shaukat Aziz	August 28 2004	In office

## **Appendix-II**

### **Presidents of Bangladesh**

Sl.No.	Name	Took Office	Left Office
01	Sheikh Mujibur Rahman	11 April 1971	12 January 1972
02	Abu Sayeed Chowdhury	12 January 1972	24 December 1973
03	Mohammad Mohammadullah	26 December 1973	25 January 1975
04	Sheikh Mujibur Rahman	25 January 1975	15 August 1975
05	Khandakar Mushtaq Ahmed	15 August 1975	6 November 1975
06	Abu Sadat Mohammad Sayem	6 November 1975	21 April 1977
07	Ziaur Rahman	21 April 1977	30 May 1981
08	Abdus Sattar	30 May 1981	24 March 1982
09	Hossain Mohammad Ershad	24 March 1982	27 March 1982
10	A.F.M.Ahsanuddin Chowdhury	27 March 1982	11 December 1983
11	Hossain Mohammad Ershad	11 December 1983	6 December 1990
12	Shahabuddin Ahmed (acting)	6 December 1990	10 October 1991
13	Abdur Rahman Biswas	10 October 1991	9 October 1996
14	Shahabuddin Ahmed	9 October 1996	14 November 2001
15	A.Q.M Badruddoza Chowdhury	14 November 2001	21 June 2002
16	Jamiruddin Sircar (acting)	21 June 2002	6 September 2002
17	Iajuddin Ahmed	6 September 2002	<i>In office</i>

### **Prime Ministers of Bangladesh**

Sl.No.	Name	Took Office	Left Office	Political Party
01	Tajuddin Ahmed	11 April 1971	13 January 1972	Awami League
02	Mujibur Rahman	13 January 1972	26 January 1975	Awami League
03	Mohammad Mansoor Ali	26 January 1975	15 August 1975	Awami League
04	Mashieur Rahman	29 June 1978	12 March 1979	Bangladesh Nationalist Party
05	Shah Azizur Rahman	15 April 1979	24 March 1982	Bangladesh Nationalist Party
06	Ataur Rahman Khan	30 March 1984	9 July 1986	Jatiya Party
07	Mizanur Rahman Chowdhury	9 July 1986	27 March 1988	Jatiya Party
08	Moudud Ahmed	27 March 1988	12 August 1989	Jatiya Party
09	Kazi Zafar Ahmed	12 August 1989	6 December 1990	Jatiya Party
10	Khaleda Zia, 1 <sup>st</sup> time	20 March 1991	30 March 1996	Bangladesh Nationalist Party
11	Mohammad Habibur Rahman	30 March 1996	23 June 1996	(none)
12	Sheikh Hasina Wajed	23 June 1996	15 July 2001	Awami League
13	Latifur Rahman	15 July 2001	10 October 2001	(none)
14	Khaleda Zia, 2 <sup>nd</sup> time	10 October 2001	29 October 2006	Bangladesh Nationalist Party
15	Lajuddin Ahmed	October 2006	10 January 2007	(none)
15	Lajuddin Ahmed	12 January 2007	In office	(none)

## **Appendix - III**

### **A View from Pakistan**

#### **PART I**

(Extracted from Hamoodur Rehman Commission Report of 1972-74. This was a commission appointed by President Z.A.Bhutto of Pakistan under Pakistan's Chief Justice to examine causes of 1971 failure and to pin point the responsibility.)

#### **THE IMPORTANCE AND RELEVANCE OF INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS**

In the preceding chapters we have endeavoured to analyse the political factors leading to the tragic events in East Pakistan. We now turn to an examination of the international relations and influences which have a direct bearing on the subject of our enquiry. National security and defence are inextricably linked with foreign policy, which in turn, is a product of the geographical location, political philosophy and national ideology of a people.

Most of the emergent nations in Asia and Africa have found that the end of the liberation struggle was only the beginning of the struggle for survival. They were not only lacking in experience to manage their international affairs, but also had no training in shaping their foreign policies as an instrument of national security and development. Their freedom of action in the realm of foreign affairs was greatly circumscribed by the influence of the Great Powers in world politics. For us in Pakistan, the problem became further complicated by the physical separation of East and West Pakistan, divided by one thousand miles of Indian territory. Our location gave us a strategic significance both in South-East and in the Middle East. In West Pakistan we occupy a highly sensitive area, having as our neighbours China, Soviet Union, Afghanistan and Iran, whereas in East Pakistan we were a part of South-East Asia by virtue of our proximity to Burma, Thailand, Vietnam, Malaya and Indonesia, countries regarded as the

nerve centres of western imperialism in Asia. But the cause of our major problems has been India's inability to reconcile herself to our existence as a sovereign independent state.

The need for protecting their independence and sovereignty is felt more keenly by the small states than by the big powers who are strong enough to safeguard their own interests. One of the basic failures of world politics has been that states respect power and exploit weakness no matter what the rules of international law might say. The gulf between the rules of international conduct and actual behaviour of states continues to exist. Small and developing countries are vulnerable in many ways.

They are weak both military (sic) and economically. Moreover, they are involved in frontier disputes they have inherited from their colonial masters. To be able to stand on their own feet they need economic and financial help which the Great Powers are in a position to provide. Unfortunately, as suppliers of aid, the Great Powers intervene in, and influence the policies of, the recipient states.

The emergence of global powers in the last twenty years has changed the whole concept of conducting affairs of state. The task of smaller nations, in which category all the developing nations fall, in determining their relationship with global powers and furthering their national interests has become more complex and difficult. This relationship is on an unequal footing, and no small nation can possibly bring a global power under its influence on the plea of justice or because of the righteousness of its cause. In the ultimate analysis it is not the virtue of the cause that becomes the determining factor but the cold self-interest of the global powers which shapes their policy, and this self-interest has better chances of prevailing in an endless and unequal confrontation between a global power and smaller nations.

In the light of these considerations it is highly instructive to study the state of our relations with India, as well as with the three global powers, during the months immediately preceding the outbreak of hostilities in November 1971. Such a study would, however, not be complete without a brief historical review of the development of these relations since the establishment of Pakistan.

It will be seen that our foreign policy has passed through three distinct phases. The first phase was that of implicit reliance on the United Nations to guarantee our national security and to secure to the people of Kashmir their right of self-determination. When it became clear that United Nations was ineffective in the face of Indian intransigence, we were forced to abandon our policy of non-alignment. We entered into a bilateral defence agreement with the United States

of America, and also became members of the SEATO and CENTO as part of the global strategy of the Western Powers. This phase ended in disillusionment when the United States and her western allies started arming India from 1959 onwards, in utter disregard to any consideration for our national security. Thus began the third and the present phase of our foreign policy, namely, a policy of peaceful co-existence with all countries of the world on the basis of respect for each other's sovereignty, territorial integrity, mutuality of interests and non-interference in each other's internal affairs. This is a policy of bilateralism, a relationship for mutual benefit but not at the cost of relations with a third country. Basing our actions on these principles we had fairly succeeded in normalising our relations with all our neighbours except India. However, certain unhappy events led to a rift between Pakistan and the Soviet Union over the political crisis in East Pakistan. All these matters will have to be touched upon in their proper context.

We shall conclude this part of the Report by examining the role played by the United Nations in handling the problem of East Pakistan refugees, the mounting tension between India and Pakistan as well as the situation arising out of the actual outbreak of hostilities between the two countries.

## **INDO-PAK RELATIONS**

The dictates of reason, the compulsions of geography, and the influence of international forces require that India and Pakistan should live in peace, but their poverty-stricken masses have been denied the benefits that ought to have accrued to them from political independence. In the Hindu national consciousness, as inspired by many Hindu writers of the last century, the subcontinent is conceived as one and indivisible from Khyber hills to the far South with the North West, which is now Pakistan, as its heart and soul. Geographically India was never completely united under one rule, except that of the British, and nominally for a few years under the Mughal Emperor Aurangzeb. However, now that the Muslims have succeeded in carving a home for themselves, Pakistan is considered by the Hindus as a cruel mutilation of Bharat Ma'ta, their motherland. The Indian leaders agreed to Pakistan only when it became clear to them that partition was inevitable and that they had to concede to this division as a price for the transfer of power from British to Indian hands. Gandhi, Nehru, Patel and the other Hindu leaders never really conceded the two-nation theory. They accepted partition as a matter of bitter expediency, in the

hope and expectation that the new state would not be viable and would collapse under pressure from its larger and powerful neighbour.

From the very outset India's ambition has been to absorb Pakistan or turn her into a satellite. The colossal problem of refugee rehabilitation was created in 1947 by India to cripple our economy. This was accompanied by denying us our share of the assets of undivided India, and the threat of diversion and stoppage of river-waters flowing into our territory. Contrary to all agreements and principles, India forcibly occupied a major part of the State of Jammu and Kashmir and concentrated her forces there, thus posing a constant threat to our security.

The Indian leaders made no secret of their designs. Mr Acharya Kripalani, who was President of the Indian National Congress in 1947, declared: "Neither the Congress nor the nation has given up its claim of a united India." Sardar V B Patel, the first Indian Home Minister and the strongman of the Congress party, announced at about the same time: "Sooner or later we shall again be united in common allegiance to our country." Thus, from the day of Independence, Pakistan was involved in a bitter and prolonged struggle for her very existence and survival. The central issue between India and Pakistan is whether an Islamic State and a secular Hindu state can co-exist in relative peace?

After partition of the Subcontinent the first major event, apart from the problem of refugees and the division of assets, which brought the two countries to the verge-of confrontation, was the Indian treatment of the large Muslim minority in that country. The situation worsened to such an extent that in 1950 Prime Minister Liaquat Ali Khan had to undertake a hazardous journey to India in the climate of mounting tension, to conclude what is popularly known as the Liaquat-Nehru Pact. This document opens with the following general declaration:

"The Governments of India and Pakistan solemnly agree that each shall ensure to the minorities throughout its territory, complete equality of citizenship, irrespective of religion, a full sense of security in respect of life, culture, property and personal honour, freedom of movement within the country and freedom of occupation, speech and worship, subject to law and morality."

It is of course unfortunate that the Liaquat-Nehru pact has been honoured more in the breach than its observance. Frequent communal riots involving acts of loot and arson, kidnapping, rape and killing of innocent Muslims have

continued. The relations between the two countries were also affected by the mass exodus of population from each in the wake of partition. The operation of evacuee laws promulgated by the two governments has also led to considerable recriminations. Another factor which made its appearance at this time was the difficulty of implementing the awards of the Boundary Commissions, particularly the Bagge Award in East Pakistan.

Further complications were caused by the Indian refusal to allow to Pakistan its due share in the waters of the Indus-basin rivers in West Pakistan and of the River Ganges in East Pakistan. The Indus-basin Water Treaty did set the controversy at rest in West Pakistan, but the thorny question of the Farraka Barrage in East Pakistan was still unsolved when the 1971 war broke out.

The most explosive dispute between the two countries has, of course, been the occupation by India of the greater part of the predominantly Muslim state of Jammu and Kashmir on the pretext that the Maharaja had signed an instrument of accession. Geographically, economically and culturally, Kashmir is a part of Pakistan and would have naturally and inevitably acceded to it if the people had been left free to make their own choice. Its occupation by the Indians was an act of pure and naked aggression, amounting to a denial of their right of self-determination accruing to the people of Kashmir. It is not our intention, nor is it necessary for the purposes of the present report, to embark upon any elaborate discussion of the course the Kashmir dispute has taken during the last quarter of a century. It would suffice to say that throughout these long years India has thwarted every effort by Pakistan and the United Nations to reach a peaceful settlement of this dispute in accordance with the several resolutions of the Security Council. Since the ceasefire brought about by the United Nations with effect from the 1st of January, 1949, India has constantly engaged herself in actions calculated to aggravate the dispute, thereby not only causing misery, resentment and frustration among the Kashmiris, but also threatening the security of Pakistan. The initiative taken by Field Marshal Muhammad Ayub Khan in meeting Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru in New Delhi on the 1st of September, 1960, and again at Rawalpindi between the 19th and the 23rd of September, 1960 did not produce any tangible result.

The Sino-Indian border conflict of October 1962 provided the United States of America the opportunity for which she had been looking from the time of partition of the subcontinent. Although relations between Pakistan and United States had continued to grow during the late fifties, since the signing of the Mutual Security and Assistance Agreement on the 19th of May, 1954, yet the

United States had been constantly making overtures to India by offering massive economic aid, despite of India's firm commitment to the policy of so-called non-alignment. It appeared to the United States that India's cooperation was essential for the success of the American global policy of the containment of Communist China. The rout of the Indian army in Ladakh and NEFA evoked immediate reaction in the United States. Without so much as consulting Pakistan, Western allies of the United States were mobilised to render military assistance to India. In the meantime, on the 21st of November, 1962, China unilaterally declared a ceasefire and withdrew its forces; but Mr Nehru, encouraged by the quick and zealous response of the

West—and in particular the United States —declared in December 1962, that India would continue its military preparations even if the Sino-Indian Border dispute was settled. The Indian military build-up, primarily with the assistance of the United States, tilted the balance against Pakistan, thus seriously endangering her security. It is interesting to observe that even earlier India had received military assistance from the United States under a Mutual Defence Assistance Agreement signed in 1951 (reaffirmed in 1958), but until—1962 the Americans had continued to draw a distinction between a non-aligned India and the American ally Pakistan. This distinction, however, disappeared after the Sino-India War of 1962.

The United States and her allies encouraged the Indians to believe that they would soon be facing a full-fledged invasion by China. Simultaneously with arming India, President Kennedy on the 28th of October, 1962, wrote to President Muhammad Ayub Khan requesting him, inter alia, to assure Mr Nehru that he could count on Pakistan's taking no action on the frontiers to alarm India or to compel her to maintain large forces on India's borders with Pakistan. In this letter President Kennedy assured Pakistan that such action taken in the larger interest of the subcontinent would do more in the long run to bring about a sensible resolution of Pakistan-India differences than anything else he could think of. When President Ayub showed his reluctance to oblige pressure was brought to bear upon him, through the British Prime Minister, Mr Harold Macmillan and the Australian Prime Minister, Mr R G Menzies. Further efforts were made through personal visits to Pakistan and India by Mr Duncan Sandys, then Secretary of State for Commonwealth Relations in the British government, and Mr Averell Harriman, US Assistant Secretary of State for Far Eastern Affairs. As a result of these moves, a joint statement was issued by Field Marshal Ayub and Mr Nehru on the 29th of November, 1962, agreeing to direct

talks on Kashmir and other related matters so as to enable India and Pakistan to live side by side in peace and friendship.

This joint statement was signed by Nehru at a time when the military situation between China and India had looked dismal from the Indian point of view. The Chinese were moving rapidly at both ends of the valley in the NEFA area; a major part of the Indian forces in the NEFA had been rendered ineffective. It appeared that the Chinese might take Tezpur, Jorhat and Digboi. However, within weeks of the unilateral declaration of ceasefire by China, the Indian attitude changed completely and the talks, which had never held much promise, got bogged down in procedural wrangles and academic inanities. Once the United States and other Western countries had decided that they would not link arms aid to India with a settlement of the Kashmir dispute, the Indians felt that they were under no compulsion to enter into serious discussions with Pakistan. The Indians were obviously playing for time. They had been able to secure a great deal of arms aid from the West, and a joint statement promising talks on Kashmir did not seem to them to be too high a price to pay. Thus a great opportunity for a peaceful settlement of the Jammu and Kashmir dispute was lost, without the Indians showing any appreciation for the extremely magnanimous gesture made by Pakistan in the hour of India's peril.

With every accession to its military strength and industrial potential, India's attitude towards Pakistan became increasingly aggressive. Indian leaders felt that they were about to realize their dream of hegemony of Asia, which happily coincided with the American concept of Asian security. There was frequent talk in the United States of a possible confederation between India and Pakistan, linked by a joint defence over Kashmir. The entire concept was of course based on the supremacy of India in Asia, without any regard for the security of Pakistan. It was in these circumstances that India embarked upon a series of new repressive measures leading to the popular agitation over the Hazrat Bal shrine incident which was, of course, ruthlessly suppressed. A large-scale ejection of Muslims was started from across the ceasefire line so as to make room for the settlement of militant Sikh and Dogra families. In this way the situation was deliberately brought to a head.

In April 1965, India embarked upon military operations in the Rann of Kutch. Although the battle went badly for the Indian forces and Pakistan was in a position to inflict a humiliating defeat on them, the military advantage was not pressed home by Pakistan, and we agreed to refer the Rann of Kutch dispute to international arbitration. The armies of the two countries, however, remained

confronting each other at the borders until India launched a perfidious attack on Pakistan during the early hours of the 6th of September 1965.

India has, no doubt, been alleging that she was forced to cross the international frontier owing to infiltration of guerillas into Kashmir from West Pakistan, whereas our position has been that there were no infiltrators and it were the Kashmiris themselves who had revolted against Indian rule. It was further our position that our forces struck at Chamb so as to prevent the possible loss of Azad Kashmir and a direct threat to Pakistan as a consequence of the crossing of the ceasefire line by the Indian forces. The Indian attack was severely condemned in most parts of the world and India was accused of aggression across an international border. Numerically superior Indian forces were stopped by a much smaller but highly determined Pakistani army on both the Lahore and Sialkot sectors. The Pakistan Navy and the Pakistan Air Force also gave an extremely good account of themselves in combating the enemy forces. The Indian attempt to dismember and capture Pakistan stood defeated.

After the ceasefire came the Tashkent Conference, which was a triumph of Russia's new diplomacy and the beginning of a fresh approach to the Indo-Pakistan subcontinent. In spite of the popular reaction to the Tashkent Declaration, there was hope that this new initiative by the Soviet Union might open the way to a peaceful settlement of the Indo-Pakistan disputes, but alas that was not to be. A meeting was indeed held with India in March 1966, but the Indians were adamant and did not agree to the inclusion of the Kashmir dispute in the agenda for the talks, on the pretext that public opinion in India was opposed to such a course. In October 1966, Pakistan expressed its willingness to negotiate with India on all matters in a third country. In 1969, we suggested a self-executing machinery consisting of officials of the two countries to resolve all disputes. In 1970, we suggested withdrawal of all India and Pakistan forces from Kashmir to enable its people to exercise the right of self-determination. No progress could, however, be made because of India's negative attitude.

Pakistan also held a series of talks with India to resolve the Farraka barrage dispute, but the question of the sharing of the quantum of waters of the Ganges remained unsolved. We also expressed our willingness to discuss resumption of trade and air services provided India showed accommodation in sharing the Ganges water with East Pakistan. All these efforts met with little success. As a result, all these disputes have remained un-resolved and India continues to occupy the State of Jammu and Kashmir by force, thus perpetuating the old animosities and conflicts.

In this background of relations between India and Pakistan, since their independence in 1947 it is not difficult to appreciate the part played by India in precipitating the crisis in East Pakistan. Direct evidence of India's collusion with anti-state elements in East Pakistan had come to light when the Agartala conspiracy was unearthed in 1967. It was revealed that as early as September 1964, a revolutionary organization was formed, for separating East Pakistan from the rest of the country, and Sheikh Mujibur Rahman became associated with it. India had promised not only arms and financial aid for organizing a revolt in East Pakistan, but it had also undertaken that on the D-Day it would block the air and sea routes linking East Pakistan with West Pakistan. It is true that owing to a combination of circumstances a judicial verdict cannot be pronounced in the Agartala conspiracy case, but the evidence of India's complicity in that affair could not be lightly brushed aside. It is in fact significant that events in 1971 have followed the pattern disclosed during this case.

On the 30th of January, 1971, the Indian authorities staged the hijacking of one of their planes to Lahore, and its subsequent destruction by the hijackers, who have been found to be Indian agents as a result of a judicial inquiry held by a Judge of the Sind and Baluchistan High Court. This incident was seized upon by the Indian government to ban flights of Pakistan's civil aircraft in order to increase difficulties and tensions between the two wings of Pakistan at a critical juncture in the political and constitutional negotiations between the Pakistan government and the leadership of the Awami League in East Pakistan.

At about the same time India also made certain unmistakable military moves to back up the secessionists in East Pakistan. Large number of troops were moved towards the East Pakistan borders in February and March 1971. Jet fighters and transport aircraft were concentrated in airfields in the border areas. In addition to regular forces, numerous battalions of the Border Security Force (BSF) were moved to the borders of East Pakistan, BSF marking was removed and jeeps and other vehicles had been repainted in civilian colours. It has been established by subsequent inquiries that many of these BSF battalions were engaged in operations inside East Pakistan from late March 1971, onwards. The Pakistan army was able to capture large quantities of Indian arms and ammunition from miscreants from inside East Pakistan territory.

Although the army action in East Pakistan, ordered by General Yahya Khan on the 25th of March 1971, was clearly an internal and domestic matter, Indian leaders openly started interfering in the crisis. Formal resolutions in support of

"Bangladesh" were passed in several Indian State Assemblies, and the Deputy Chief Minister of West Bengal went so far as to state that "we in West Bengal recognize Bangladesh although the central government has not done so yet." A resolution was also moved by the Indian Prime Minister in the Indian parliament and passed by both Houses on the 30th of March, 1971, expressing 'profound sympathy and Solidarity with the people of East Bengal' and assuring them that 'their struggle will receive the whole-hearted sympathies and support of the people of India.' On the 4th of April 1971, the All India Congress Committee unanimously adopted the resolution passed by the Indian parliament on Bangladesh. Speaking on the resolution, the General Secretary of the West Bengal unit of the All India Congress Committee, Mr K.K. Shukla, said, "Sheikh Mujibur Rahman was fighting India's war."

Apart from political leaders, the Indian press and the Indian intellectuals also took a hand in this matter, and left the world in no doubt about the consistent Indian aim of seeking to enfeeble and dismember Pakistan. On the 30th of March 1971, the Bombay daily "Indian Express" openly advocated India's armed interference in East Pakistan by saying that "It is a truly historic moment, and the time to act is now."

On the 7th of April, 1971, the Director of the Indian Institute for Defence Studies, Mr Subramaniam, in a reference to the India-backed armed rebellion in East Pakistan, said that "what India must realize is the fact that the break up of Pakistan is in our interest and we have an opportunity the like of which will never come again."

The same theme was repeated by another Indian commentator, Subramaniam Swamy, in an article published in the Indian daily "Motherland" on the 15th of June 1971. Considering the pros and cons of the break up of Pakistan the commentator argued that "the territorial integrity of Pakistan is none of our business." That is Pakistan's worry. All we should concern ourselves with is two questions: Is the break up of Pakistan in our long-term national interest? If so, can we do something about it? The article concluded with the observations that "the break up of Pakistan is not only in our external security interest but also in our internal security interests. India should emerge as a superpower internationally and we have to nationally integrate our citizens for this role. For this the dismemberment of Pakistan is an essential pre-condition."

Finally, the Indian Prime Minister herself declared on the 15th of June 1971,

that "India would not for a moment countenance a political settlement which meant the death of Bangladesh." This statement coming from the highest authority in India set the seal on India's evil designs and her aggressive intentions towards Pakistan.

Right from the beginning, India made intensive efforts to internationalize the political crisis in East Pakistan. She launched a worldwide diplomatic campaign aimed at:

- invoking some kind of international intervention under the plea of 'stopping genocide' and restoring political rights to the people of East Pakistan and
- creating a climate in which her own intervention, if found necessary and expedient, would not invite much adverse international reaction. The numbers of refugees from East Pakistan, and the financial burden of supporting them, were exaggerated beyond all proportions. Appeals were made to international agencies on humanitarian grounds, and highly exaggerated and distorted stories of atrocities were circulated in the international press. In the beginning the Indian efforts did not evoke much response from the international community, but as the army action in East Pakistan became prolonged without an acceptable political solution in sight, the world reaction became hostile to us. We shall have occasion to refer to this matter later, but at this stage it is sufficient to say that India made full use of the conditions prevailing in East Pakistan to further its own ends.

Side by side with the diplomatic offensive, the government of India started active physical intervention in East Pakistan by training and arming the members of what came to be known as the 'Mukti Bahini, and infiltrated them into East Pakistan. The information available to the Commission shows that during the period from March 1971, to October 1971, the Indians trained and sent across to East Pakistan miscreants for the purpose of creating large scale disturbances, disrupting means of communication, and causing terror among the peace long and patriotic elements of East Pakistan.

The Indians also started shelling of East Pakistan villages. Confirmed reports of incidents in the areas of Benapol (Jessore), Hilli (Dinajpur), Barangamani (Rangpur), Kamalpur (Meminshahi), Atgram, Zakiganj and Dhulai (Sylhet), Saldanadi (Comilla), Balonia (Noakhali) and Ramgarh (Chittagong), are available. These shellings not only continued in an open violation of our international border, but also created considerable panic and confusion in the border areas, thus leading to a large influx of refugees into India. These Indian acts of aggression also prevented the return of refugees to East Pakistan, in spite

of the fact that the then President of Pakistan had declared a general amnesty, welcoming every bona fide resident of East Pakistan who had been compelled to cross over to India due to the political disturbances. Thus, on the one hand, Indian were raising a lot of hue and cry over the refugee problem and the desirability of a political settlement, on the other hand they were doing every thing possible to thwart the attainment of these objects.

Simultaneously with the provocative and hostile acts described in the preceding paragraphs, the Indians started concentrating their troops near the borders of East and West Pakistan, thus deliberately creating an explosive situation. Apart from the regular shelling carried out by the Indian artillery with increasing intensity by October-November 1971, Indian Air Force also started violating air space over East Pakistan, and the Indian Navy stepped in to interfere with our merchant ships and to pose a serious threat to all vessels approaching the ports of Chittagong, Khulna and Karachi.

During these critical months, Pakistan took several initiatives to defuse the situation. We have already mentioned the grant of general amnesty to those who had crossed into India. The government also established reception centres to facilitate the return of refugees from India. It agreed to receive representatives of United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees so as to enable this UN Agency to form its own estimate of the nature and magnitude of the refugee problem. The Pakistan government also permitted several groups of foreign parliamentarians and journalists to visit the borders and see things for themselves. On the military side the government proposed the withdrawal of forces from both sides of the border and stationing of UN military observers. When India did not agree to these proposals Pakistan went to the extent of making a unilateral offer to receive military observers only on her side of the borders. However, none of these proposals were accepted by India, not did the international community bring any pressure on India to accept the same.

While tension was thus mounting between the two countries, the Indian Prime Minister, Mrs Indira Gandhi, undertook in October and November 1971, an extensive tour of western capitals to enlist support for her aggressive designs on Pakistan. She repeatedly emphasized the intolerable financial burden and the moral, political and social strains imposed on India by the influx of East Pakistan refugees. Before her own tour she had sent out almost all her cabinet ministers and other high officials to various countries to obtain political and financial support for her country as against Pakistan.

Since the army action in East Pakistan on the 25th of March, 1971,

important leaders of India, like Mr J P Narian, the Defence Minister Mr Jugjeevan Ram, the Minister for Tourism and Civil Aviation Dr Karn Singh, the Finance Minister, Mr Y B Chavan and the Chairman of the Foreign Policy Planning Committee Dr D P Dhar, started making frequent statements supporting the demand for an independent Bangladesh, and insisting that the only solution acceptable to India would be the one demanded by Sheikh Mujib. They also started threatening Pakistan with open war. It appears that for the first time this was hinted by the Indian Prime Minister on the 18th of May 1971 when she declared that "India was fully prepared to fight Pakistan."

On the 13th of June, the Indian Minister for Industrial Development said in Hague, public opinion in my country is inclined towards the view that war with Pakistan would be less expensive than the aid to refugees."

On the 25th of June, the Foreign Minister, Mr Swarn Singh, told meeting of the ruling Congress party, "we may have to take action on our own if a satisfactory solution to the Bangladesh crisis is not found soon."

After signing the Indo-Soviet treaty on August 9, 1971, Mr Swarn Singh made a statement in the Lok Sabha on August 10 in which he said, "the Indo-Soviet Treaty did not prevent India from taking unilateral action in Bangladesh."

Another significant statement in this behalf came from the Indian Minister for Labour and Rehabilitation Mr R K Khadikar, when he declared on August 22, 1971, that "the Indo-Soviet Treaty had strengthened the forces of liberation in Bangladesh."

The Government of India continued to aggravate matters in various ways. When it was reported that certain East Pakistanis attached to the office of the Pakistan High Commission in Calcutta had defected to Bangladesh, the Indian government not only refused permission to our Deputy High Commissioner there to meet the East Pakistani personnel so as to ascertain their true wishes, it made life impossible for the Deputy High Commissioner by subjecting him to humiliating restrictions on his movements and freedom of action as a diplomat. The Pakistan High Commissioner in New Delhi was also denied the customary privileges and courtesies. At about the same time the government of India persuaded the secessionist Awami League leaders to establish a so-called government of Bangladesh in Calcutta. The Indian hastened to accord diplomatic recognition to the 'so-called government of Bangladesh on the 6th of December 1971.

**Not Declassified**

We have said enough to show that by October and November 1971 it had become abundantly clear that, true to its traditional hostility towards Pakistan, India was inexorably moving towards an open war of aggression against Pakistan. The conclusion flows directly from the declarations of her leaders, her diplomatic activity throughout the world, her signing the Indo-Soviet Treaty on the 9th of August, 1971, the moves of her armed forces on the borders of both wings of Pakistan, her rejection of all reasonable proposals to defuse the situation, and her constant support for training and equipping the anti-state forces in East Pakistan. This conclusion was forcefully brought out by our foreign office as well as by the intelligence agencies of the armed services. The then President Agha Muhammad Yahya Khan was fully apprised of the same. We were therefore greatly surprised when the General stated before us that he was hoping that India would not start an open war. It is not easy to assess the influence which such a misconception might have exercised on the General's actions and decisions in preparing the nation and the armed forces for this eventuality. All we can say is that if indeed General Yahya Khan acted under any such misconception, then he betrayed a colossal lack of understanding of India's intentions and designs.

## **FOREIGN PRESS AND PUBLICITY**

The political crisis in East Pakistan and the consequent military action attracted worldwide attention. A large number of foreign correspondents present in Dacca on the eve of the military action were unceremoniously thrown out by the Martial Law authorities, with the result that the entire foreign press was fed on information sent across from the Indian side of the border. Gruesome stories alleging mass-killing, rape, loot and arson by the Pakistan army were reported prominently in the world press, particularly in Britain and United States. The large-scale exodus of refugees from East Pakistan to India, and the Indian propaganda drive heavily tarnished the image of Pakistan in the eyes of the international community.

It is hardly necessary to quote extensively from the stories published in various leading newspapers and journals of the world, and it would suffice to give here only a few typical extracts. The sum and substance of the criticism of the world press was that under pressure from the West Pakistan Army and politicians, President Yahya Khan had struck unsuspecting East Pakistan population after lulling them into a sense of false security through negotiations,

and had unleashed a war of extermination in a bid to repress the majority of Pakistanis demanding provincial autonomy, and that he had done so in order to preserve the interests of a powerful minority.

The British newspaper 'Daily Sketch' reported in its issue of March 29, 1971, that:

"When flood and famine devastated the people of Ganges Delta, Yahya Khan was reluctant to throw his planes and military personnel into the rescue operation. When the same people dared to give overwhelming democratic backing to their own leader, Shaikh Mujib, now President Yahya Khan has been quick enough to use his tanks and troops."

The Times of London published in its issue of 29th March, 1971, a news report by Paul Martin saying that:

"The Pakistan military regime's attempt to crush Shaikh Mujibur Rahman and his Awami League, and so regain control of East Pakistan may prove disastrous. For, in East Pakistan eyes it has served to justify the arguments of the extremists that co-existence with the West-dominated Central government is impossible and that the only solution is an independent Bangladesh achieved by any means."

The Daily Telegraph, London, published in its issue of March 29, 1971, a news report sent from New Delhi by David Loshau to the following effect:

"Killing on a mass scale is under way in East Pakistan, caught in the grip of a vicious civil war, according to all available indications from the province, which is now virtually sealed off from the outside world."

"Diplomatic sources which still have tenuous radio links with their missions in Dacca, as well as foreign observers who have left the province since fighting began on Friday, say the 70,000 West Pakistan soldiers are showing no mercy in their bid to suppress the Bangladesh independence movement. Estimates of the number of Bengalis who have been killed range from 10,000 to 100,000. Whatever the true figure there can be no doubt only of the Army's determination to

impose its will on the province but of the relish and ruthlessness with which it will do so."

'New York Times reported on April 1, 1971, that:

"United States administration has charged that it was receiving but not making public reports of heavy bloodshed in East Pakistan and that one cablegram with the State Department from outside Pakistan had used the expression "selective genocide.'

Nothing effective was done by the Government of Pakistan to counter-act these mischievous stories. It "appears that the reason for our ineffectiveness in this field was not only the inadequacy or incompetence of our information agencies, but the magnitude of the crisis and its prolongation for several months on end. Another reason was the anti-Pakistan and anti-Muslim bias of the world press, a major portion of which is controlled by Jewish interests. Still another factor was the universal suspicion and dislike of the military regime by democratic societies. It is significant that even the White Paper, explaining the events in East Pakistan, was not issued by the government until five months later in August 1971. By that time the stories circulated in the world press had taken such root that no one was prepared to believe Yahya Khan's version as given in the White Paper.

Of course, there were some favourable comments as well, particularly in the brotherly Muslim countries, which condemned the secessionist tendencies of the Awami League and justified President Yahya Khan's military action in the interest of national integrity and sovereignty. However, these favourable comments could not prevent the East Pakistan crisis from becoming an international issue, especially on the humanitarian side.

Belated attempts were made by President Yahya Khan to repair the damage by permitting foreign correspondents to visit East Pakistan, and by inviting parliamentary delegations from other countries. The Foreign Office also sent out several circulars and publicity material to our missions abroad for the purpose of projecting the Pakistan point of view, but it was only when the government of India embarked upon its calculated aggression against East Pakistan that world opinion veered round to condemn efforts aimed at dismemberment of Pakistan.

It was in these circumstances that in the initial stages of Indian acts of aggression there was little sympathy for Pakistan, nor was attention focussed on

the sufferings caused by the secessionists to patriotic Bengalis and Beharis alike in East Pakistan.

One important fact which clearly emerges from the treatment of the East Pakistan situation or crisis by the world press is that no government can hope to tide over such situations by ignoring the world opinion, nor can it afford to black out authentic news and information regarding important events happening within its frontiers. Civilized communities can no longer exist in isolation. There is, therefore, an imperative need for the Pakistan government to strengthen its foreign publicity and to have the courage to disclose true facts in their proper perspective.

## **UNITED NATIONS**

In order to appreciate the role played by the United Nations in relation to the crisis in East Pakistan, and for putting a stop to hostilities after the Indian invasion had commenced on the 21st of November, 1971, we had requested our Ambassador at the United Nations Mr Agha Shahi, to compile an authentic account of the various moves and events as they unfolded at the United Nations. The Ambassador has been good enough to send us a detailed narrative which makes an extremely interesting reading, and brings out clearly the part played by United States, the Soviet Union, China, Great Britain, France and the Afro-Asian countries. It also serves to emphasize the importance, in the presence of the veto power of the permanent members of that body, as well as of the General Assembly to restore peace between two warring member states. Even though one hundred and four nations of the world supported Pakistan's stand in the General Assembly, the repeated use of the Soviet veto in the Security Council successfully barred the taking of timely action to prevent the dismemberment of Pakistan.

### **Not Declassified**

When the East Pakistan crisis began in March 1971, government took the position that it was purely an internal matter and, therefore, beyond the political, or even humanitarian intervention of the United Nations or any of its organs or agencies. This stand was later modified only to the extent of admitting humanitarian assistance from the United Nations.

In conformity with this attitude, the Mission succeeded, from late March to

July, in resisting any political intervention in the crisis by the United Nations. India first tried to engage the Security Council. Thwarted in that attempt, it raised the issue in the ECOSOC as a case of massive violation of human rights. Despite the support of some members, however, it did not succeed in obtaining any pronouncement or resolution against Pakistan from ECOSOC in May.

But the magnitude of the crisis, especially reports of large-scale killings and a massive exodus of refugees, had the inevitable effect of focussing international attention on the problem. Gradually, the acceptance of our position (which was based on the principle of domestic jurisdiction) diminished and the trend of opinion began to turn against us. On 23rd June, Prince Sadruddin Agha Khan, UN High Commissioner for Refugees, publicly called for a political solution in East Pakistan, thus articulating what by then had become a general trend of opinion in UN circles.

On the 20th of July, the secretary-general of the United Nations, who had earlier expressed his concern at the situation in East Pakistan in humanitarian terms, sent a confidential memorandum to the President the Security Council for circulation among the Council members. This memorandum drew attention to the grave political implications of the problem and dwelt on the crisis as a potential threat to international peace.

At this stage, government first continued to resist the idea of any consideration of the situation by the Security Council. Within a few days; however, it changed its mind and expressed the view that a Security Council meeting 'may prove useful' in averting a conflict. But since no formal request for a meeting was decided to be made, the members of the Security Council were unwilling to meet on their own accord. The diametrical opposition between India's and Pakistan's views was considered by them as an insuperable obstacle to a useful outcome.

Faced with this, government then proposed that a good offices committee of the Security Council should visit India and Pakistan. The suggestion elicited Some sympathetic interest from the non-permanent members of the Council but was regarded skeptically by the permanent members and opposed outright by the Soviet Union.

The secretary-general made an offer of his good offices to both India and Pakistan on 20th October. The former President welcomed the offer in his reply of 22nd October and suggested the withdrawal of the forces of both countries to a mutually agreed safe distance" on either side of the border. Nothing came of this offer, as India did not accept it.

From this point on until the actual outbreak of hostilities in the West (3rd December) government kept addressing the secretary-general and asking for his initiative. The secretary-general could do nothing without a mandate from the Security Council.

## **War**

The proceedings of the United Nations concerning the war can be divided into four distinct phases. The first phase lasted from the Indian invasion of East Pakistan on 21st November to the outbreak of general hostilities on 3rd December; the second from 3rd December to the day (10th December) when General Farman Ali's message was received and interpreted at the United Nations as capitulation; the third from 10th December to the ceasefire on 17th of December and the last from the cessation of hostilities to 21st December, when the Security Council adopted Resolution 307 (1971).

### **Phase One**

During this phase, no move was made by the government to request a meeting of the Security Council. The commission feels that it was due to the fear that a consideration by the Security Council might end in foisting a political solution on Pakistan which was unacceptable to government.

### **Phase Two**

After the outbreak of war in the West, the Security Council met, principally at the request of the United States. Pakistan's case, as presented in the Council, centred on India's armed intervention followed by outright invasion. It demanded condemnation of Indian aggression, a ceasefire and withdrawal of forces. On the other side, India's case consisted of (a) allegations of 'genocide' by the Pakistan government in East Pakistan, (b) the impossibility of the return of the refugees without a political settlement acceptable to the elected representatives of East Pakistan, (c) the consequent necessity of the immediate achievement of such a settlement, (d) the allegation that Pakistan had initiated hostilities in the West and (e) the assertion that only a political solution in the East would end the hostilities.

At this stage, there were three distinct positions taken by the members of the Security Council. The first, partly supported by the majority and articulated in the draft resolution of the United States (S/10416) which called for an immediate ceasefire/withdrawal of armed personnel etc, was favourable to Pakistan. While China charged India with committing aggression against Pakistan, the majority of the Council members stressed the importance of an immediate cessation of hostilities and a subsequent consideration by the Council of 'the issues which have given rise to the conflict' China, Somalia and Argentine also stressed the need for the withdrawal of the forces of both sides from each others' territory.

The second position was that of the Soviet Union which proposed its own draft resolution (S/10418) calling "for a political settlement in East Pakistan which would inevitably result in a cessation of hostilities" and for the taking of measures "by the Government of Pakistan to cease all acts of violence by the Pakistani forces in East Pakistan...." This position was blatantly one-sided in favour of India.

The third was that of the British and French representatives who made it clear that they would support only a resolution which would escape the Soviet veto. Their position in effect strengthened India.

The draft resolution of the United States received 11 votes in favour, but was vetoed by the Soviet Union. The Soviet draft resolution obtained only 2 votes in favour with 1 against and 12 abstentions.

The two resolutions had left the majority of the Council members dissatisfied as, in their view, for a resolution to be effective and balanced, its essential ingredients were:

- ceasefire,
- withdrawal, and
- an early political settlement in East Pakistan.

Accordingly, eight non-permanent members proposed a new draft resolution incorporating the two first elements in the operative part and the third in a preambular paragraph. This draft resolution (S/10423) also received 11 votes in favour with 2 against and 2 abstentions. The Soviet veto killed the draft resolution; Britain and France abstained.

After exercising its two vetoes, the Soviet Union subtly sought to moderate its one-sided stand. This resulted finally in its proposing a new draft resolution (S/10428) which recognised that the hostilities between India and Pakistan constituted an immediate threat to international peace and security and called upon "all parties concerned forthwith as a first step for an immediate ceasefire"

and upon the government of Pakistan simultaneously to take effective action towards a political settlement in East Pakistan, giving immediate recognition to the will of the East Pakistan population as expressed in the elections of December 1970. But the Soviet Union did not press this draft resolution to a vote because there was no hope of its adoption by the Council. In accordance with government's instructions, we opposed the Soviet proposal as being tantamount to asking us to agree to the immediate secession of East Pakistan under the duress of Indian aggression.

At this stage, the non-permanent members of the Security Council were feeling frustrated by Soviet vetoes and endless Soviet filibusters. They agreed to refer the question to the General Assembly under the Uniting for Peace resolution. The Council adopted this decision by 11 votes in favour and 4 abstentions (Soviet Union, Poland, Britain and France).

The General Assembly met on 7th December and adopted resolution 2793 (XXVI) with 104 votes in favour, 11 against and 10 abstentions. This resolution was practically identical to the text of the draft resolution (S/10423) which had been submitted to the Security Council by eight non-permanent members and vetoed by the Soviet Union on 5th December.

It will be seen that, during the second phase, Pakistan won a massive endorsement of its position by the General Assembly insofar as Indian invasion and armed intervention were concerned. The proceedings of the Security Council also had given no political comfort to India, even though the Soviet veto had succeeded in preventing a call for immediate ceasefire and withdrawals. It must be stressed, however, that these results were possible because at that time Pakistan was still thought to be determinedly resisting Indian aggression.

### **Phase Three**

This impression, so essential to our bargaining position, was abruptly destroyed early on 10th December, by the note handed over in Dacca by General Farman Ali to Mr Paul-Mare Henry, the secretary-general's representative. This note was superseded later by another proposal from Governor Malik which, the foreign secretary informed us, was "authorized," even though, on instructions. The submission of the authorized message to the secretary-general was withheld and the secretary-general was asked to disregard Farman Ali's note. The two proposals, despite differences between them, made it clear that Pakistan could not sustain the military confrontation any longer. The purport of Farman Ali's

offer became generally known through the delegations of certain permanent members of the Security Council.

The news of Farman Ali/Malik proposals was communicated to Mr Bhutto as soon as he arrived in New York on 10th December. Extremely shocked, he immediately sent a telegram to the former president saying that Farman Ali's offer would "spell the humiliating end of the whole of Pakistan" and that he "would not participate in the implementation of such an ignominious surrender." President Bhutto suggested to the former president to "continue resolutely on the lines of our discussion before my departure." In later messages, he also suggested to bring the Chinese and American delegations to an agreement and to try to hold and, if possible improve our military position on the ground for a week.

On 12th December, President Bhutto held intense consultation with high level US officials and with the Chinese delegation. It was decided that the Security Council meeting should be convened urgently and a draft resolution identical to the one adopted by the General Assembly should be moved in the Council and after it was vetoed by the Soviet Union, a simple ceasefire resolution should be introduced.

In reply to President Bhutto's urgent messages the former president stated that Farman Ali's "slip had been nipped in the bud" and that the former president's own offer had been "confined only to ceasefire" and even this, on subsequent developments, had been withheld. However, the former president said that "holding our militarily for at least one week" would be "fatal to our position." His telegrams stressed the need for "fastest action," meaning a ceasefire. In another telegram, the former president said that he agreed to the tactics worked out with the United States and the Chinese delegations.

On Dec 12, in a situation which was increasingly becoming desperate, President Bhutto urged the former president to go to China as a last resort and try to get its effective intervention in order to save the country.

The Security Council was reconvened on Dec 12. The foreign minister of India, demanding that the representative of Bangladesh be invited, asserted that their presence was imperative, for the success of any proposal for a ceasefire, "not only in Bangladesh but also in the West," President Bhutto referred to the "dire importance" of the occasion "not only to Pakistan but to the world community and the United Nations." He emphasized that the issue involved all states, big and small. He argued that "states are not to be penalized for their mistake." He reminded the Soviet representative of the promise made to Pakistan

of non-interference in its internal affairs which had been belied by the Indo-Soviet Treaty.

The proceedings of the Security Council from this meeting onwards made it clear that the Soviet Union was determined not to allow any resolution to pass which did not link the ceasefire with a simultaneous political settlement in East Pakistan. The Soviet representative's appreciative reference to the Farman Ali formula can be understood in this light. The government's hope for a simple ceasefire thus proved to be unrealistic. The United States draft resolution (S/10446/Rev.l), which in substance was identical to the General Assembly resolution 2793 (XXVI) was again vetoed by the Soviet Union.

After the third Soviet veto, the delegates of the United Kingdom and France privately criticized the US delegation for pressing to a vote a resolution which was certain to be vetoed by the Soviet Union. They announced that they would work for a formula that would be acceptable to all on the basis of three elements:

- cessation of hostilities,
- disengagement of forces and
- ensuring justice, meaning a political settlement. It became apparent that they were waiting for the fall of Dacca, so that they could induce Pakistan to accept a call for political settlement and thus placate the Soviet Union and India. Following news reports of India's call for surrender to Pakistan forces in Dacca, the British and French delegations took the initiative to canvass a text which called for:
  - an immediate ceasefire on the border of West Pakistan and on the 1965 ceasefire line in Kashmir;
  - negotiations between military commanders of both sides in East Pakistan for an immediate ceasefire by all forces under their command;
  - negotiations for a comprehensive settlement of all the differences which led to the crisis, including a political settlement, in accordance with the wishes of the people of East Pakistan, and
  - an affirmative response by the two governments to the proposal of the secretary-general offering his good offices.

While we were engaged in efforts to have this draft modified, reports reached here of Gen. Niazi's approach to the Indian army chief of staff for a ceasefire in East Pakistan. Consultations among members of the Security Council thereafter were influenced by this complete collapse of Pakistan's military position in the East.

At this stage, the United States' delegation informed us that it had not been able to persuade the Soviet Union to accept a simple ceasefire resolution. It became apparent that there was no possibility left of our obtaining a resolution from the Security Council which would

- safeguard Pakistan's territorial integrity and
- command India's acceptance.

Since the endless consultations without any result, which would respect Pakistan's basic position demeaned the country, Mr Bhutto resolved that what was our national humiliation in Dacca should not also amount to our national humiliation at the UN. Accordingly, we requested an urgent meeting of the Security Council which was addressed by Mr Bhutto. He declared that he would not be a party to the legislation of aggression and 'to ignominious surrender of part of my country'.

He walked out of the Security Council chamber after concluding his address.

This courageous and defiant gesture was applauded by large sections of even a hostile press and by the delegations of all small countries. Some Arab delegates privately remarked that Mr Bhutto had done what they had regrettably failed to do in a similar situation of military defeat and humiliation in 1967.

The impact of Mr Bhutto's walk-out was apparent when, at the next meeting of the Security Council, a member conceded" that Mr Bhutto was "quite entitled to complain of the absolute paralysis of the Security Council" and informed suggestions were made for taking the matter back to the General Assembly. Against the background of a rapidly deteriorating situation, a number of draft resolutions were proposed: one by Poland; the second by the UK and France; the third by Syria and the fourth by the Soviet Union. All these proposals gave emphasis, in varying degrees, to "a political settlement."

Of these, the Anglo-French draft resolution (S/10455) became the most important. *Inter alia*, it called for:

- an immediate and durable ceasefire and cessation of all hostilities in all areas of conflict in the Western theatre and for an immediate and durable ceasefire and cessation of all hostilities by the forces in East Pakistan, to remain in effect until operations of disengagement leading to withdrawals have taken place in both theatres.
- The urgent conclusion of a comprehensive political settlement in accordance with the wishes of the people concerned as declared through their elected and acknowledged representatives and in conformity with the

purposes and principles of the UN charter.

While this text was still being negotiated and we were making efforts towards its alteration in our favour, the news came of the request of our military commander in East Pakistan for a ceasefire. The British later told us that they were no longer in a position to press for inclusion of the principles of withdrawals in the Anglo-French text.

We continued to try to obtain a simple ceasefire resolution together with a call for adherence to the Geneva Convention as it was felt that in this drastically changed situation, inclusion of any reference to a political settlement would legitimize the fait accompli. The threat of the Soviet union veto—however, once again prevented the non-permanent members from tabling a new resolution which would call for an immediate ceasefire on both fronts by 16th December to be followed by disengagement and withdrawals from all occupied territories.

On 16th December, Chairman Bhutto received a telegram from the former president indicating an acceptance of the Anglo-French draft, preferably with modifications and, in case of its non-adoption, reversion to a simple ceasefire resolution. Before this message could be acted upon, report was received of the signing of the instrument of surrender in Dacca; the UK and French delegations no longer pursued their proposals. At the Council's next meeting the same day, the Foreign minister of India read out his prime minister's statement containing a unilateral declaration of ceasefire.

The Soviet Union sought to make capital out of India's declaration and moved a fresh draft resolution (S/10458) welcoming the cessation of hostilities in the East and seeking to ensure "an unimpeded transfer of power to the lawful representative of the people elected in December 1970." The proposal attempted to put the onus on Pakistan to reciprocate India's decision. It called for an immediate ceasefire along the entire border between India and Pakistan and 'along the ceasefire line of 1965 in Jammu and Kashmir.'

The drastically transformed situation consequent on the Dacca surrender rendered all previous draft resolutions obsolete. Since the latest Soviet draft resolution was now the only one in the field, it was necessary to have it countered. Accordingly, we requested the US to revive the text that had been prepared and negotiated on the previous days by the non-permanent members, but dropped by them under the threat of the Soviet veto. The US responded to our request and moved the draft resolution (S/10459/Rev.I) with Japan as co-sponsor. Its main provisions were:

- Demands that an immediate and durable ceasefire and cessation of hostilities

in all areas of conflict be strictly observed and remain in effect until operations of disengagement take place, leading to prompt withdrawal of the armed forces from all the occupied territories;

- Calls upon all those concerned to take all measures necessary to preserve human life and for the observance of the Geneva Conventions of 1949 and to apply in full their provision as regard the protection of wounded and sick prisoners of war and civilian population;
- Invites the secretary-general to appoint a special representative to lend his good offices in particular for the solution of the humanitarian problems."

Even though this draft resolution sought to placate the Soviet Union by omitting any provision to supervise a ceasefire, the Soviet Union still opposed it. It objected to "prompt withdrawals from all the occupied territories" which implied that East Pakistan was a territory occupied by India. It did not want any reference to the General Assembly resolution No 2793 (XXVI) or to UNEPRO. Moreover, it did not want that a text should pass at that stage with the US as its sponsor.

## **Phase four**

The former president responded to the Indian unilateral declaration of ceasefire by ordering his forces also to ceasefire on Friday with effect from 1430 GMT. The declaration suggested that if India was sincere in its declaration of ceasefire "then she should proceed through the United Nations to formalise it." However, after communicating its unilateral declaration to the Security Council, India had no interest in "formalizing" the ceasefire.

In response to the former president's urgent messages, Mr Bhutto left for Washington to meet President Nixon and thereafter flew back to Pakistan.

While, in the eyes of others, the issue lost much of its earlier urgency due to the stoppage of fighting, our effort to secure a resolution which, besides formalizing the ceasefire, would call for withdrawals from the occupied territories and restoring the ceasefire line in Jammu and Kashmir had to continue. This effort lasted from 17th to 21st December. It was the representative of Somalia who took the lead to consultation with the parties in order to evolve a text which would escape the Soviet veto. India insisted that such a text should include

- no reference to the General Assembly resolution 2793;
- no mention of the ceasefire line in Jammu and Kashmir or

- no provision for withdrawals relating to both the eastern and western theatres in identical terms. We resisted India's demands and, after protracted negotiations, succeeded in securing a draft resolution (S/ 10465) which contained all these three "elements."

The draft resolution (S/10465) was adopted at the final meeting of the Security Council on 21st December by 13 votes, none against and 2 abstentions (USSR and Poland). The authoritative interpretation was read out by Somalia.

After the adoption of the resolution, we made it clear that it did not detract from the tragic fact "that the Council had failed signally in dealing with the situation in accordance with the principles of the Charter." We also placed on record the considerations which would govern our government's attitude towards the resolution read with the authoritative interpretation given by Somalia.

The foreign minister of India, questioning the relevance of the reference to the General Assembly resolution 2793, stated that his country was willing to arrive at arrangements with the parties concerned to settle not only withdrawals, but also other problems by mutual negotiations. He also stated that the existence of Bangladesh and its government could not be ignored. The representative of Pakistan suitably replied to India's intervention.

## **Postscript**

Subsequent to the proceedings of the Security Council, President Bhutto appealed to heads of states/government, which are members of the Security Council, to use their influence to stop the massacres of non-Bengalis by the Mukti Bahini. In pursuance of this appeal, we urged the secretary-general to send a special representative under paragraph 5 of resolution 307 (71). We also strongly urged upon all members of the Security Council to take immediate action to stop the bloodbath. They advised that a meeting of the Security Council would be inopportune and unproductive until the secretary-general's special representative submitted his report.

On 26th December, we communicated to the secretary-general the government's message conveying acceptance of the Security Council resolution 307(71) and emphasizing that the resolution had been adopted under Chapter VII of the charter. The message declared that it was only the vacation of aggression without 'delay by India in East Pakistan and in all other areas of conflict, including the ceasefire line in Jammu and Kashmir, that would restore peace to the subcontinent.

India sent a communication to the secretary-general (document S/10501) on 10th January which stated that India was "willing to open bilateral negotiations with Pakistan for effective withdrawal as soon as practicable of all armed forces". As regards the withdrawal of Indian troops from East Pakistan, it stated that "both the governments of India and Bangladesh are seized of the matter" and that the withdrawal would take place "as soon as the two governments consider it practicable". The communication finally contained assurances of India's fully abiding by the Geneva Conventions of 1949 and of its cooperation with the United Nations for a satisfactory solution of all the humanitarian problems.

In the light of the events as narrated in the preceding paragraphs, three questions need to be answered:

- Whether it was possible to refer the matter to the Security Council in November 1971 immediately after India had launched its open invasion of East Pakistan? If so, with what result?
- Whether there was any possibility of an honourable ceasefire in East Pakistan accompanied by withdrawal of forces, if the eastern command had held out a little longer instead of surrendering, as it did on 16th December, 1971?
- Whether it was possible to achieve a favourable result by accepting the Soviet, the Polish or the Anglo-French resolutions? If so, why were they not accepted by Pakistan?

In order to answer the first question it would be useful to state a few facts regarding the gradual internationalization of the East Pakistan crisis. From March to July 1971, the position taken by the government of Pakistan was that the East Pakistan crisis was entirely a matter of internal jurisdiction and, therefore, beyond the intervention of the United Nations. This view was apparently shared by a majority of the members of the Security Council as well as by the secretary-general of the United Nations. However, within a few weeks, after the March 25, 1971, the secretary-general felt constrained to express his concern over the situation in East Pakistan, though still on humanitarian grounds. At the 50th session of the Economic and Social Council in New York in May 1971 India made a determined bid to involve the Council in the situation in East Pakistan as a case of massive violation of human rights, but the Pakistan representative succeeded in persuading the ECOSOC against any decision or pronouncement in the matter. But on 23rd June 1971, Prince Sadruddin Agha Khan, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, stated at a conference at the UN that only a political solution in East Pakistan would bring

about the repatriation of the refugees whose exodus had been of an unprecedented nature and colossal magnitude.

This statement was significant because it was the first time that any UN official had publicly called for a political solution and thus articulated what had become a general trend of opinion in UN circles.

On 25th July 1971, the Pakistan government changed its view and informed its representative at the UN that a Security Council meeting may prove useful in averting a conflict with India and, therefore, Pakistan would favour calling a session to discuss the threat to peace in the subcontinent. As there was no formal request for calling a meeting of the Security Council, and as the Soviet Union and the other members of the Security Council were not favourably inclined at that stage, nothing materialized.

The Pakistan government then proposed that a good offices committee of the Security Council should visit India and Pakistan with a view to defusing the threatening situation. The suggestion elicited some sympathetic interest from the non-permanent members of the Security Council, but was opposed outright by the Soviet Union. Even the other permanent members regarded the same sceptically. The Soviet opposition was motivated by support for India and was also in conformity with her traditional aversion to any informal moves by the Security Council which would tend to erode her veto power.

On 3rd/4th October 1971, President Yahya Khan addressed a personal message to President Nixon of the United States drawing his attention to the "war-like situation in Pakistan and India and requesting that the US government extend the necessary help and assistance in this grave hour with a view to facilitating an urgent consideration of the situation by the Security Council". He added, "in case you deem that some other course of international action at this stage would be more helpful, I shall be grateful to be apprised of it".

This message was delivered to Dr Kissinger, the National Security Adviser to President Nixon, on the evening of 6th October 1971 by Mr Alvie, the Additional Foreign Secretary to the government of Pakistan, who was then on a US visit. Dr Kissinger told Mr Alvie and Ambassador Hilaly that he would immediately place the message before President Nixon and then communicate his views to Ambassador Hilaly. Meanwhile, he said, he would also consider this matter careful adding that they would look into it with great sympathy.

Speaking of his own initial reaction, Dr Kissinger said that in case Pakistan decided to take the matter to the Security Council the US will be sympathetic, though in his opinion reference to Security Council "won't take us anywhere and

perhaps more could be done by talking to Indians and Soviets".

He observed that the Security Council debate where Soviet exercise veto might also "inflame public opinion and thus worsen the situation". Finally, Dr Kissinger observed that he would like to discuss the matter in Peking with the Chinese leaders and see their reaction.

From 6th October 1971 to 21st November 1971, when East Pakistan was invaded by the Indian forces, there was no formal request from the government of Pakistan for a meeting of the Security Council, although in his correspondence with the UN secretary-general, Gen. Yahya had welcomed the good offices of U Thant. Even as late as 23rd November Gen. Yahya Khan, in a message to the secretary-general, merely sought the latter's personal initiative, although it had become abundantly clear that the secretary-general could take no initiative in the circumstances without a mandate from the Security Council. It had become unlikely that he would invoke Article 99 of the United Nations charter because of his feeling that the responsibility for suitable action lay on the Security Council, which had been apprised of the situation by him through his memorandum of 20th July 1971. U Thant explained this position clearly to the President of Pakistan in his letter of 26th November 1971, stating that for the moment he had gone as far as he was permitted under the charter.

On 29th November 1971, Gen. Yahya Khan again addressed the secretary-general suggesting the immediate stationing of a force of the UN observers on the Pakistan side of the East Pakistan border to report on its violations. On 3rd December 1971, after the outbreak of hostilities in the west, the then president once again addressed the secretary-general, expressing the hope that the international community would take note of the situation and uphold the principles of the UN charter forbidding the use of force and safeguarding the territorial integrity of all nations.

Thus, on the factual side, it appears that at no stage of the Indo-Pakistan crisis did President Yahya Khan consider it expedient to make a formal request for Security Council meeting.

To the last, he preferred to leave it to the secretary-general or to the members of the Security Council themselves to take the initiative, which none of them was willing to take. The Security Council members felt that it was for Pakistan or India to request a meeting.

Ambassador Agha Shahi seems to hold the view that the failure of the government to ask for a formal meeting of the Security Council immediately after the Indian invasion of East Pakistan had an important effect on the

Council's consideration of the problem later. To use his own words "by not lodging a complaint in the Security Council about the Indian invasion as soon as it was launched, Pakistan assumed a posture different from that of a victim of aggression. It weakened the credibility of our claim regarding both the intent and the scale of Indian military action".

It appeared to the ambassador that the reluctance of government to approach the Security Council at this stage was caused by the government's anxiety to avoid any resolution which would call for a political settlement of the problem *i.e.* for an accommodation with the Awami League.

This known anxiety on our part produced the impression on friendly countries that either the government of Pakistan had detached itself from realities, or perhaps Pakistan was so strong militarily and so confident of making decisive gains in the western theatre later (particularly in Jammu and Kashmir) that it did not wish its freedom of action to be restricted by the pronouncements and decisions of the Security Council. It is indeed significant that the invasion of East Pakistan by India is perhaps the only instance of an armed attack by one member state of the UN upon the territory of another which the victim did not immediately bring before the Security Council. On the outbreak of hostilities on the West Pakistan-India border on 3rd December 1971, there was still no formal request for a meeting of the Security Council, though the Pakistan government had prepared a draft resolution of its own a few days earlier. However, on 4th December 1971, the US government conveyed to Pakistan its intention to request a meeting of the Security Council on their own, whether or not Pakistan agreed.

Ambassador Shahi does not appear to be alone in thinking that we should have requested for a meeting of the Security Council immediately after the Indian invasion of East Pakistan. A journalist by the name of Mr Qutubuddin Aziz (witness No 36), who was working in our embassy in Washington since April 1971, has Expressed the view that from about 12th November 1971 onwards the Americans had become apprehensive about India's intention to launch a major offensive against East Pakistan, and they were, therefore, inclined to support a request for a meeting of the Security Council. According to Mr Aziz, the Americans had come to this view on realising that there was not much chance of Mrs Indira Gandhi allowing the American diplomatic initiative for a peaceful political solution to work out.

When questioned on this point, the Foreign Secretary Mr Sultan Mohammad Khan (witness No 143) stated that during the period prior to 21st/22nd

November, 1971 the US was not sure of the wisdom of our going to the Security Council; but once East Pakistan had been invaded, and the government of India had itself admitted that her military commanders had been given permission to cross the borders of East Pakistan for taking defensive action, the situation had radically altered. At this stage, the US was all for calling a-meeting of the Security Council, but, according to Mr Sultan Muhammad Khan, President Yahya Khan was not in favour of such a move right up to 4th or 5th December, 1971. The assessment of Mr Sultan Muhammad Khan is that this reluctance on the part of Gen. Yahya to go to the Security Council was due to his confidence that the Pakistan Army would make certain short-term gains on the western front.

We asked the former president to explain the circumstances and reasons which prevented him from taking the matter to the Security Council after the Indian invasion of East Pakistan on 21st November 1971. His replies to our questions show that he was all along thinking of the position obtaining in October 1971 when Dr Kissinger had indicated to the additional foreign secretary, in reply to president's message of 4th October, 1971 addressed to President Nixon, that the time was not opportune then to move the Security Council. This reply has, of course, no relevance to the situation created by the Indian invasion on 21st November 1971. The fear of the Soviet veto was no reason for not approaching the Security Council. There is no evidence that the other permanent members of the Security Council were reluctant to discuss the issue or to support the cause of Pakistan. Gen. Yahya Khan's repeated communications to the UN secretary general for using his good offices has been properly replied to and it had become clear that U Thant was no longer in a position to take any personal initiative.

Considering all these facts and circumstances, it becomes amply clear that there was a positive failure on the part of Gen. Yahya Khan to immediately call for a meeting of the Security COUNCIL once India had launched a full scale invasion of East Pakistan on 21st November 1971. The ambassador, Shahi has rightly stated that this was perhaps the only solitary occasion when the victim of aggression had not chosen to request for a meeting of the Security Council. It appears that Gen. Yahya Khan's reluctance arose out of two factors;; (a) his fear that the world community might insist on a political settlement in East Pakistan with the duly elected leaders of the province, including Sheikh Mujib; and (b) his misplaced confidence that his army would be able to achieve substantial short-term gains in the western sector, thus ensuring a strong bargaining position

for Pakistan in the event of ultimate ceasefire in both the wings.

The first factor was in the nature of a personal blind spot and should not have been allowed to prevail at the expense of national integrity. The second factor could have been of significance provided the requisite measures to achieve military gains had been taken with proper planning and firm determination—qualities—which we have found lacking in the conduct of military operations by the army high command. Our finding, therefore, is that it was not only possible to take the dispute to the Security Council immediately after 21st November 1971, but that it should have been so taken, and that there was everything to be gained thereby. In the atmosphere then prevailing the international community was sympathetic to Pakistan in view of the naked aggression unleashed by India.

Turning now to the question whether it could have been possible to obtain an honourable ceasefire in East Pakistan by holding out somewhat longer beyond 16th December 1971, it is necessary to juxtapose the diplomatic situation obtaining at the UN over the military situation in Dacca. This exercise would also provide us an answer to the question regarding the feasibility of accepting the Soviet, the Polish or the Anglo-French resolutions on the subject.

Gen. Yahya Khan's fear of a political settlement in East Pakistan, specially with Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, seemed to continue to haunt him and befog his judgment to the end, in apparent total disregard of the realities of the situation.

From 4th to 10th December 1971 the discussions at the UN apparently proceeded on the basis that the Pakistan army was putting up a determined resistance, and that the Indian operations in East Pakistan might become a long drawn-out affair. The vote at the General Assembly meeting on 7th December 1971 was unprecedented and reflected this impression of the international community. The actual military situation at that juncture was, however, somewhat different and may be briefly reviewed here.

In East Pakistan, the opening of the western front brought in its wake an intensified effort by the Indian army and particularly the Indian air force.

Dacca airfield and other targets were attacked on the night of 3rd and 4th and on 5th December. The Indians achieved advances in practically all sectors except Comilla which held out like a 'fortress' but the Indians by-passed it north and south. The pressure on Jessore which was the first to be attacked on 20/21st November had continued unabated since 21st November and according to the Indians it had fallen in the end of November, whereas the eastern command continued to claim they were holding out in Jessore until 5th December.

However, we are more interested in trying to assess the military situation from 7th onwards because the Governor of East Pakistan Dr A.M.Malik initiated the first of his three distress signals on that date. The absence of key evidence is, of course, a handicap but we have been able to establish the position to be somewhat as follows on 7th December.

Indian Navy had completely blockaded East Pakistan. In the western part of the province, Jessore and Benapol had fallen, and the enemy was advancing towards Faridpur and Khulna. An enemy divisional attack was aimed at Dinajpur and a deeper thrust between Rangpur and Bogra. This was making progress. This thrust had isolated the troops who were on the border in the Rangpur salient. Thus in this entire salient we were left with either a brigade strength fortress in Rangpur or those out posts which were still fighting along the border.

Another brigade fortress was being formed at Bogra which was now under threat by the afore-mentioned thrust from the Hilli-Pirganj direction. In the Mymenshahi sector the battle was also not going well and our troops were falling back from the border towards Mymenshahi and Jamalpur. Further to the east in Sylhet, a, regular and an ad hoc brigade, the latter mainly civil armed forces had been falling back under pressure from north, south; and east of Sylhet and by 7th had organised themselves for fortress defence around Sylhet itself. Just north of Comilla the vital railway line linking Comilla, with Sylhet, had been cut by an enemy force in the area of Akhura a couple of days earlier and the brigade in this area was being pushed back. By 7th December it had left its border position and fallen back to Titas Canal, but Comilla garrison was holding out well, South of Comilla, the enemy had made numerous inroads and it seemed that our brigade in the area would not be able to withstand the pressure. A divisional attack from Tripura direction aimed at Chandpur on the Meghna river was developing and the L of C Chittagong to Comilla was as good as obstructed.

At this stage the following message was sent by the governor, East Pakistan to the president: Flash signal No: A-6905/(of 07-1200) to HQ CMLA:

"It is imperative that correct situation in East Pakistan is brought to your notice."

"I discussed with General Niazi who tells me that troops are fighting heroically but against heavy odds without adequate army and air support(.) rebels continue their attacks in rear and losses in equipment and men are very heavy and can not be replaced(.) the front in

EASTERN and Western sectors had collapsed(.) loss of whole corridor East of Meghna river can not be avoided(.) Jessore has already fallen which will be a terrible blow to the morale of pro-Pakistan elements(.) civil administration ineffective as they can not do much without communication(.) food and other supplies running short and nothing can move from Chittagong or within the province(.) even DACCA city will be without food after 7 days(.) without fuel and oil there will be complete paralysis of life(.) law and order situation in areas vacated by army pathetic as thousands of pro-Pakistan elements being butchered by rebels(.) millions of non-Bengalis and loyal elements are awaiting death(.) no amount of lip sympathy or even material intervention will help(.) if any of our friends is expected to help that should have aft impact within the next 48 hours(.) if no help is expected I beseech you to negotiate so that a civilised and peaceful transfer takes place and millions of lives are saved and untold misery avoided(.) is it worth sacrificing so much when the end seems inevitable(.) if help is coming we will fight on whatever consequences there may be."

It will be seen from our review of the military situation as given earlier that Governor Malik's message was perhaps a little on the alarming side but the factual position was not all that far removed from it either.

President Yahya replied vide his flash signal No: A-455 of 07-1925 hours.

"Your flash signal number A-6905, dated 7 Dec refers(.) all possible steps are in hand(.) full scale and bitter war is going on in the West Wing(.) the world powers are very seriously attempting to bring about a ceasefire(.) the subject is being referred to the General Assembly after persistent vetoes in the Security Council by the Russians(.) a very high-powered delegation is being rushed to New York. Please rest assured that I am fully alive to the terrible situation that you are facing(.) chief of staff is being directed by me to instruct General Niazi regarding the military strategy to be adopted(.) you on your part and your government should adopt stringent measures in the field of food rationing and curtailing supply of all essential items as on war footing to be able to last for a maximum period of time and preventing a collapse. God be with(.) we are all praying."

The point we would like to make, however, is that Governor Malik's message alone must have left no doubt in the mind of Gen. Yahya Khan that the morale of the Eastern Theatre was cracking up fast if it had not already

collapsed. Therefore, the first inference to be drawn was, the immediate launching of the master plan if Gen. Yahya Khan was still convinced and determined to save East Pakistan by military action from the West, if, as will be seen elsewhere in the report, he was still obsessed with military 'pre-conditions' for its launching, and was losing confidence in his ability to time it in relation to the rapidly deteriorating situation in the East the least that was necessary was serious second thoughts on the hard line adopted at the United Nations.

However, it was on this day that Pakistan had received the unprecedented vote of the General Assembly in favour of Pakistan and it may, therefore, be conceded that our supreme commander's and president's morale was understandably high on that day. The deputy prime minister-designate had been dispatched to the UN; the world at large was supporting Pakistan, so 7th December may not have been the day when Gen. Yahya would consider any change in his attitude.

But the situation as it developed between 8th to 10th December, both in the East and in the West was entirely different. During 8th and 9th December, some further deterioration in the military situation, took place. The division responsible for Jessore sector was falling back under enemy pressure towards Faridpur and Khulna. It is also learnt that the naval elements at Khulna and Mangla were ordered to move to Chittagong and Narainganj. In northern Bengal, pressure against Bogra fortress was building up whereas the enemy was closing to Tista River. In the north-east the enemy landed a heliborne battalion near Sylhet. In Brahmanbaria sector, the bridge holding the approach to Bhairab fell back to area Ashuganj and Bhairab Brigade over Meghna River. The besieged troops at Laksham on the Tripura border in the meantime ... and joined the Comilla garrison, thereby laying open the approaches to Chandpur.

A signal from flag officer commanding East Pakistan (Pakistan Navy) addressed to C-in-C Pakistan Navy, initiated at 1825 hours (East Pakistan standard time) on 9th December is of special interest as it summarises the situation as seen at the HQ, eastern command. Extracts are reproduced below:

"Our land defence regrettably has collapsed sooner than expected. In eastern sector the enemy troops have reached Chandpur. The antiaircraft regiment was evacuated last night.

para 2. the shore wireless service, rail and waterway communication systems remain during the night under heavy and continuous air interdiction supported by full scale renewed rebel activity(.) This has

brought logistic supply system almost to a stand still.

Attrition rate gunboats has been registered fairly high as aircraft have been picking 25 knots boats dispersed between Bhabok Barisal(.) Casualty rate 15 fairly high. List is being prepared. Sixty per cent of naval force has been rendered non-operational(.) Indians are using their helicopter drops capability to full extent and so far three drops have taken place in Sylhet, Hilli and Brahmanbaria areas.

para 5. eastern command is in process pulling back troops from various sectors to redeploy at Dacca as a last stronghold if... so permits.

para 6. Our ill-equipped divisions without adequate artillery or armour, limited airforce with only one airfield and improvised naval force, all have withstood the Indians onslaught steadfastly but human endurance has its own grateful limitations which fade away with time(.) my personal optimistic assessed situation is that at present rate ammunition expenditure with limited supply available, which cannot be replenished, and fast converging of overwhelming Indians amphibious forces on to Dacca fully backed up by air cover and rebels our heroic stand may not last more than a week."

It would be noted that according to this signal enemy troops had reached Chandpur on the Megna River fairly close to Dacca by the evening of 9th December.

The same day (9th December) the governor of East Pakistan sent a second important message to the president seeking his approval on certain proposals, which in the absence of this signal can only be inferred from the reply which was sent back by the president the same day. In his reply the president said:

"You have my permission to take decision on your proposals to me In view of our complete isolation from each other decision about East Pakistan I leave entirely to your good sense and judgment.

...I will approve of any decision you take.... Whatever efforts you make in your decisions to save senseless destruction of the kind of civilians that you have mentioned in particular the safety of our armed forces, you may go ahead and ensure safety of armed forces by all political means that you will have to adopt with our opponent."

We should pause here to analyse the implications of Gen. Yahya Khan's reply. As we see it the low morale has been accepted: permission has been granted to take any measures and any decisions the aim of which is to save lives and, it is to be noted, there is no mention of the fact that "honourable settlement is only possible provided you and East Command hold out at least one week while I launch my master plan". Even "political means" have been mentioned but the caveat "with our opponent" is both interesting and significant. It ties up with Gen. Yahya's consistent opposition to any political settlement with Sheikh Mujib, his personal blindspot, but does it not appear completely desperate and inconsistent in the context of the circumstances. Whichever aspect one may examine, a local 'political' arrangement with India does not make sense: their attitude and demands regarding freedom for East Pakistan were quite clear. At the United Nations, Russia had twice vetoed any resolution which ignored a political settlement with the elected representatives of East Pakistan. It would be understandable therefore if the governor interpreted the message to mean that he had received the go-ahead, to do anything that his "good sense and judgment" dictated in order to achieve the aim of stopping the war.

We should not address ourselves to the emerging situation on 10th December, as it was on this date that an unexpected message was received in New York with which Maj-Gen Rao Farman Ali's name has come to be associated. The message was received in New York at 0500am. By the afternoon it was the talk of the UN and was already in the hands of the president of the Security Council and the secretary-general. It came as a shock to our principal delegate Mr Z.A.Bhutto on his arrival in New York that evening.

Maj-Gen Farman Ali's message offered certain terms for a peaceful transfer of power to the elected representatives of East Pakistan and sought a guarantee for the safety of West Pakistan personnel. The connection between Gen. Yahya Khan's phraseology and this message would be apparent. This was interpreted at the UN as an offer of Surrender and thus weakened Pakistan's case which as stated earlier, was progressing on the basis that Pakistan Army was putting up a determined resistance in East Pakistan.

Gen. Yahya Khan countermanded this message by announcing that he had only authorised negotiations for a ceasefire and not a political settlement: but the damage had been done.

In East Pakistan the major development of 10th December was a battalion helidrop rather close to Dacca near Narsingdi about 25 miles away which overpowered our EPCAF company in that area. On the same day General

Manekshaw issued his first proclamation calling for a surrender.

In West Pakistan, two important formations of Pakistan's main striking force, *i.e.* 33 Division and 7 Armoured Brigade group, were ordered to be detached from 2 Corps and split up for reinforcing the most threatened sectors, mainly Shakargarh and Rajasthan. 2 Corps, which was to deliver the main punch in Pakistan's counter-offensive from West Pakistan, was thus reduced in its strength. The chances of success of the counter-offensive were, therefore, becoming doubtful.

On the 11th December another significant development happened. A para brigade was landed in area South of Tangail about 40 miles northwest of Dacca. About the same time one of our brigades (93 Ad Hoc) which was withdrawing from Mymensingh for reinforcing Dacca ran into the Indian para Brigade. It is learnt that later on 12th and 13th December, about 900 personnel of this brigade reached Dacca.

Also on 11th-December Mr Z.A.Bhutto, who had by then apparently had the time to study the entire situation, sent a telegram No.513 to the president saying that "if the ground situation can be held and possibly improved upon for a week, I believe that the situation can return to our advantage. In any event we urge that we wait for 72 hours before any move is made in the United Nations". This means that according to Mr Bhutto it was imperative that we hold out in East Pakistan as a minimum until 14th December. In reply to this message Gen. Yahya Khan said that holding out by military for at least one week would be fatal to us and as for as "the big push" was concerned in the West this was to be left to the military commander. Mr Bhutto also asked Gen. Yahya Khan in a telegram of 12th December to make an urgent trip to China as a last resort to get China to intervene and save Pakistan. Meanwhile at 1950 hours on 13th December, the eastern command initiated a message again depicting a very serious situation and requesting that any outside assistance "must take practical shape by 14th December".

The enemy continued to build up his heliborne forces in area Narsingdi on 12th and 13th December.

At 0036 hours on the 14th, the chief of staff [of] army sent a message in reply to the afore-mentioned signal from eastern command stating "UN Security Council in Session. Most likely will order ceasefire. Matter of hours. Hold out till UN Resolution passed". But later the very same day Gen. Yahya Khan sent his signal No. 90013 at 1332 hours informing the governor of East Pakistan and commando: eastern command "you have now reached a stage where further

resistance is no longer humanly possible" He further stated that all measures should be taken to stop fighting and preserve lives of armed forces, and other people likely to be targets of miscreants such as people from West Pakistan and loyal elements. The UN had been moved to urge India to stop hostilities and guarantee safety of personnel mentioned earlier. In short he authorized the negotiations for a "ceasefire". It seems that till this stage the president was still fondly believed that he was only agreeing to a ceasefire and not a surrender (his statement before the commission refers).

The eastern command was, on this day, reporting the advance of enemy forces towards Dacca from a number of directions, including Tangail, Narsingdi and Chandpur. The Indian airforce intensified its raids. Jaydebpur ammunition depot was hit by an air strike by the enemy.

The aim of this somewhat lengthy review of the military situation and the exchange of messages has been to highlight that at such critical moments of history the situation changes from day to day and hour to hour; that military strategy has to be correlated with political decisions and diplomatic activity, and that what is going on at the United Nations at these very moments is of the utmost importance. In order to find an answer to the two questions to which we are addressing ourselves we have to establish whether General Yahya's handling of the most momentous events of our history showed such con-elation keeping in view the realities.

Let us now turn to the happenings at the United Nations. On 11th December Mr Bhutto had another series of consultation with high level US officials as well as the vice foreign minister of China to reconcile the differences in their position and to work out the tactics for referring the matter back to the Security Council as quickly as possible as it seemed that the collapse of our military position in East Pakistan was imminent. It was agreed that the Security Council meeting should be convened the same day and a draft resolution identical to the General Assembly resolution, calling for both ceasefire and withdrawal, should be tabled. It would be noted that we were still not considering any political settlement. The Security Council was consequently reconvened in the afternoon on Sunday the 12th December following an urgent request by the United States representative.

According to Ambassador Agha Shahi: "The proceedings of the Security Council on 12th December made it clear that the hope entertained by the former President of Pakistan for a simple ceasefire without a political settlement for transfer of power was unrealistic in view of the Indians being poised for victory in the battle for Dacca and the Soviet determination to oppose any settlement

which would deny the Indians fruits of impending victory."

One instance of lack of correlation must have already been noted in that in the Security Council meeting of 12/13 December there could not have been any special hope of success after the two vetoes which the Soviet Union had already imposed and yet the chief of staff in his above-mentioned signal informed the eastern command that a ceasefire would "most likely" be ordered in a "matter of hours".

Our interpretation of such a signal from the morale point of view would be that on the one hand it may be a source of encouragement but from the fighting man's point of view it would tend to lessen his will to fight.

The Security Council continued its discussion in its meeting No 1613 on the afternoon of 13th December, (NYT) (early hours of 14th December West Pakistan Time) by that time the Security Council was inclined to believe the Indian claims that Dacca would be falling any moment now and one of the members of our delegation overheard an Indian representative asking a Soviet representative to stall the proceedings until late 17th or 18th December by when Dacca was certainly expected to fall.

The USA resolution with the minor revision (S/10446 Ref.I) was discussed on 13th December (NYT) Suit-was vetoed by Russia, this being their third veto. At this juncture on the one hand the military front in the East had already collapsed and on the other the Russians were vetoing any resolution which did not bring in the question of a political settlement of the East Pakistan problem. It should have been apparent to Gen. Yahya Khan that it was time to come to the conclusion that the cessation of East Pakistan was inevitable and that the only way in which he could save face was to agree to a political solution through the United Nations. Instead, as we have noted already, he only authorized the governor, East Pakistan, that he should take all measures to stop the fighting'.

By failure to correlate all the factors rearing on the situation from day to day after 7th December, Gen.Yahya had himself condoned if not encouraged the failure of the will-power to carry on resistance in the East. His message No A-4555 of 7th December to the governor, East Pakistan, and G-0013 of 14th December refer, which have been quoted at para 72 and 79.

In the West he was finding himself unable to go through with his Master Plan. The sting had gone out of his main Striking Force when one division and one armoured brigade had to be used up to stave the rot in Rajasthan and Kutch and reinforce Shakargarh. In Shakargarh there was a picture of a losing battle with not much reliance left on the Reserve Force North's ability to stabilize the

situation. The more limited main offensive in the south with one armoured and one infantry division was kept waiting, according to Gen. Yahya's explanation, because of his fear for the Shakargarh situation. Thus the panacea of the massive retaliation from the West was no longer viable, then what was supposed to save East Pakistan and the ignominy of a Surrender if it was not the United Nations.

There the problem had from the start hinged on the much-avoided 'Political Solution' in East Pakistan which had been consistently rejected by Gen. Yahya Khan. We have already implied our understanding of Gen. Yahya's reluctance till a late juncture to give up hope of finding a better solution through the Master Plan. The 7th, 8th and even 9th may be considered too early for any radical change in his attitude because he still retained his massive punch in the West, but by the 10th he had himself broken up that striking force reducing it by a third. Gen. Yahya in his appearance before the commission has failed to justify his lack of realism at those crucial junctures.

We must now assess the various opportunities which came up after 10th December to enable Pakistan to save face and, so to speak, surrender to the will of the United Nations rather than to the invading Indian Army. We wish to stress the difference, between our world-renowned army going down in history as they will now do, as the army which was defeated in the field of battle and dishonourably surrendered, causing 90,000 personnel with tanks, guns, weapons, ships and aircraft to be captured; and an army which continued fighting gallantly under the heaviest imaginable odds until the United Nations, recognising by an unprecedented vote the justice of their cause, stepped in to impose a ceasefire. We may add the political and international advantage of such an image viz. The reaffirmation by Pakistan of the principle of democracy, in bowing to the will of 70 million people of accepting a political solution.

The first opportunity for altering our attitude at the United Nations and agreeing to a political settlement arose after the third Soviet veto on the 13th Dec afternoon. France and the UK expressed their desire to formulate a new resolution on the basis of cessation of hostilities, disengagement, ensuring justice *i.e.* a political settlement, which they felt would be acceptable to all members, including India and the Soviet Union. There was however no change in the instructions to our UN delegation and representative and as far as they were concerned they were to oppose any reference to a political settlement.

Meanwhile, the Italian representative sprang a surprise by presenting a new text (S/10451) which also called for an immediate cessation of hostilities, a withdrawal as well as immediate steps for a political solution. We requested the

Italians not to table this resolution stating that we needed instructions from home, but when the Italians presented it, we expressed our displeasure.

The next major opportunity arose on the 15th December 1971, at 7pm (0400 15th December in Pakistan) when a number of resolutions were introduced by Syria' (S/10456) UK and France (S/10455), Soviet Union (S/10457) and Poland (S/10453) Rev. a. All these resolutions, even Syria's laid emphasis on a political settlement. The Soviet draft was silent on withdrawal. In the Syrian and Anglo-French texts it was to follow a ceasefire. The British advised our UN representatives that in view of our impending surrender in East Pakistan they were no longer in a position to press for withdrawals in the Anglo-French 'text and we had to now try for a simple ceasefire together with a call for adherence to the Geneva Conventions.

Apart from the fact that we were still not prepared to talk to political solution, the 'impending surrender' was spoiling our case.

The other portion of the question therefore now remains to be answered that is to say whether the eastern command and Dacca garrison could have held out a little longer instead of surrendering as it did on 16th December. First we may address ourselves to what we mean by a iittle longer'. We have already had a look at the military picture which was by no means encouraging but it would be noted that the occasion for Dacca Garrison offering any kind of resistance did not even arise. It was pre-empted by the permission conveyed by COS Army at 2350 hours on 15th December by signal of 0015 that eastern command may accept Indian terms for a ceasefire which amounted to a surrender. At that particular time the picture was admittedly grim but the nearest Indian troops amounted to only two brigades.

One was the brigade which had landed by helicopter at Narsingdi 25 miles'away on 10th December, and the other which had parachute landed on 11th December at Tangail 35-40 miles away. It has to be remembered that paraborne and heliborne troops are weak except in small arms fire-power. Their artillery is only light pieces. They have no tanks. Their vehicles are only jeeps and at most the small (15 Cwt) trucks, thus they were presumably depending on their local friends for transport. It is also interesting that there is no evidence that after their landing they immediately started moving towards Dacca. It would seem that the Indian commander had assessed that our moral had collapsed and so felt in no hurry to advance on Dacca incurring casualties if the same result could be achieved by psychological warfare and other pressures.

It would be appreciated that if these two brigades had advanced on Dacca it

would not be a question of getting into trucks and motoring in. Normally they would expect the most determined resistance and last ditch battles. Therefore they would proceed with extreme caution, which of course would mean more time for Dacca and the fate of East Pakistan. In fact they would be inclined to time their advance in coordination with other advancing columns. None of the India columns, such as the one from Jessore, Khulna or from Bogra or from the East were, as far as we know, on the Dacca side of the huge rivers which intervene, and even unopposed crossings would take time.

Then let us try to imagine the final contact of Indian troops with Dacca. We knew that there was a proper defence scheme. There was an 'Outer Ring' and an 'Inner Ring'. Nine hundred men, representing two weak battalions, had arrived in Dacca after an encounter with the enemy para brigade. Agreed, the remaining garrison was a collection of miscellaneous administrative units together with about 1000 odd airmen and some naval personnel. But they were soldiers all and mentally attend to their role as fighting men in such eventualities. The total muster of our garrison in Dacca has been difficult to establish with any accuracy for obvious reasons, but our assessment is as follows:

The number of regular army personnel at Dacca; at this time is estimated at 5,000 personnel, who mostly belonged to local formation headquarters, signals, service units and rear parties. Pakistan Navy and AirForce had about 700, all ranks between them; The number of locally-enrolled East Pakistan Civil armed forces, Mujahids and Razakars is estimated af 13,000 and West Pakistan Police and industrial and VP security forces at 4,000. In addition. according to situation reports of eastern command, approximately 900 personnel of 93 (ad hoc) Brigade, which consisted of regular units and civil armed forces, had arrived at Dacca from Mominshahi on 12th and 13th December. The total of all categories of personnel thus amounts to about 24,000 personnel. It is difficult to establish how these personnel were, if at all, organised into groups and ad hoc units for the local defence of Dacca.

These personnel must be carrying their personal weapons, perhaps with no deficiency of small arms, ammunition, since Dacca was a logistic base. The situation about heavy weapons is however not clear. The major heavy weapons available was 37mm (single barrel) antiaircraft gun of the local AA Regiment which had previously played a significant role in the defence of Dacca against the Indian airforce. There were initially 36 guns out of which some may have been destroyed or rendered unserviceable. Being a flat trajectory high velocity weapon (maximum range 4,000 yards), it can be used in a direct fire role against

enemy vehicles and tanks. The other component of LAA Regiment was twelve 14.5mm guns which can be used as heavy machine guns in the ground support role (maximum range 2,000 yards). Presumably, there was no shortage of ammunition for the two types of weapons.

There could be at this time a few tanks and mortars in reserve in Dacca Ordnance Depot, which could have been used, provided these were in serviceable condition. It has not been established if these were actually available and were pressed into service.

Thus, having heard tell of 'Stalingard', incidentally an expression often quoted in military circles, we visualize that the approach of the two Indian brigades towards Dacca would have been met with a miscellany of fire from our Outer Ring of Defences and the Indians would have been temporarily halted. Cities are difficult objectives to take though we have to remember the awkward plight of our garrison who would be attacked from the rear as well. We visualize nevertheless that the two Indian (brigade) columns would not renew their attempt to enter Dacca's outer ring till the next day which means a 24-hour delay. If they penetrated the outer ring and contacted the inner ring a similar delay would occur meaning another 24 hours, total 48 hours, and with a bit of determination this could be doubled or even tripled.

To sum up our survey therefore we find a picture of more than one resolution on the anvil in New York, which would have given us the face-saving alluded to earlier, while our 'gallant' Dacca garrison would atleast be giving the impression, in the words of Lt-Gen Niazi, "come and get it but over our dead bodies".

We feel sure therefore that a delay of 48 if not 72 hours could have been imposed by our troops giving us a chance of avoiding the ignominious surrender, through a UN Resolution such as the Anglo-French formula which had every chance of going through, USSR had already exercised its veto three times and it was not likely to object provided it was agreed that there would be a political solution. In any case the Soviets themselves had another resolution even which would have been better than what actually happened.

Alas! This was not to be, and must now remain one of the big Ifs of history.

## CONCLUSIONS

Having surveyed the course of our relations with the Great Powers and the other important countries of the world, we feel we are now in a position to attempt an

answer to the two questions which have been upper most in the minds of most of our countrymen in connection with the conduct of our foreign policy:

- Was there an international conspiracy to dismember Pakistan, and was Gen. Yahya Khan's regime a party to such a conspiracy; and
- Whether, in the event of the answer to the first question being in the negative, the state of our relationships and alliances with the world powers justified the confidence with which Gen. Yahya Khan plunged the country into a war of destruction in both East and West Pakistan?

Some political leaders, notably Khan Abdul Wali Khan of the National Awami Party and Sardar Shaukat Hayat Khan of the Council Muslim League, as well as journalists, like Mr Altaf Hassan Qureshi of the Urdu Digest, have expressed the view before us that the fall of Field Marshal Mohammad Ayub Khan, the transfer of power to Gen. Yahya Khan and the eventual dismemberment of Pakistan owing to the policies pursued by Gen. Yahya Khan, are all a part of an international conspiracy directed by a certain superpower. While such a view may fit in with a subjective, or even a journalistic analysis of the events we are investigating, we are not at all persuaded that as a judicial tribunal we can arrive at any such finding.

The facts and circumstances, as they have emerged from the voluminous evidence examined by us, are that the basic element in our situation, right from 1947, has been the hostility of Hindu leaders to the very concept of Pakistan. The Indian leaders agreed to Pakistan only when it became clear to them that partition was inevitable as a price for the transfer of power from British to Indian hands. The issues, which have divided India and Pakistan, were certainly capable of resolution in a just and equitable manner, provided the Indian leaders had shown the necessary generosity, breadth of vision and above all, acceptance of Pakistan as an independent state. Having failed to prevent the creation of Pakistan, the Indian leaders set about weakening Pakistan in every conceivable manner, so as to realise their dream of unchallenged Indian supremacy in Asia. In 1965 India planned to inflict a decisive defeat on Pakistan and thus settle once for all the question of Indian supremacy and reduce Pakistan to the position of a satellite.

Indians had always viewed the separation of the two wings of Pakistan, as a cherished goal which was attainable under propitious circumstances. A golden opportunity was provided to India by our own internal dissension and the violent demand for regional autonomy, and later independence, put forward by the Awami League.

In this background Pakistan endeavoured to enter into various international arrangements for Safeguarding its national integrity and sovereignty. We have seen how our search for a guarantee of our national security first took us to the United Nations, then threw us into the lap of the United States of America, making us join various defence pacts. Our need happened to coincide with the global policy of the United States regarding containment of communist China. The shift in American policy in 1962, and the United States decision to arm India in spite of Pakistan's protests, was the direct result of these global requirements, and could not be attributed to any lack of cooperation or correct behaviour on our part.

Our desire to normalize relations with our great neighbours—China and Russia—met with ready response, owing once again to the fact that our requirements were found to be in harmony with the world policies of these powers. However, this state of affairs could not continue indefinitely in view of the differences which were developing between China and Russia, and the possibility of a detente between China and the United States. Our continued friendship with China came to be looked upon with suspicion by the Soviet Union which started leaning heavily towards India so as to counter-balance China in the Asian continent; Soviet assistance to India, culminating in the Indo-Soviet Treaty of 9th August, 1971, would therefore, appear to be essentially a part of the global arrangements envisaged by Russia for the security of Asia, and not a step directed towards the undoing of Pakistan.

Being aware of the hostile designs of India, and taking note of her alignment with a superpower, it was obviously for the Pakistan government to avoid creating or precipitating a situation which would enable India to proceed to embark upon a war of attrition against Pakistan by employing military equipment supplied by the Soviet Union. Once India and Pakistan got involved in a bloody conflict owing to their own inherent animosities, and circumstances created by events in East Pakistan, it is difficult to see how USSR's assistance to India, in terms of the Indo-Soviet Treaty, could be described as a conspiracy.

It can, of course, be argued that as an ally of India and a superpower, USSR could have used its undeniable influence to dissuade India from interfering in the internal affairs of Pakistan and embarking upon open aggression against a smaller neighbour. Soviet Union's failure or unwillingness to do so appears to us to be attributable to her conviction that the military regime in Pakistan was not amenable to advice in the matter of settling the East Pakistan crisis. We have already seen that even friendly countries like China, the United States, Iran,

Turkey and the United Kingdom were all advising President Yahya Khan to arrive at a political settlement with the duly elected representatives of the people of East Pakistan. Instead of doing that, the president persisted in pursuing a course of political action which had no hope of acceptance by the people of that province. Such being the case, the unrest continued to increase in East Pakistan, the refugee problem caused by this unrest continued to magnify, and the events inexorably led to disaster. It is not possible to condone President Yahya Khan's political blunders in East Pakistan, and his failure to appreciate the realities of the international situation, by saying that there was an international conspiracy to undo Pakistan.

As regards the second question, it will be seen that as the situation between India and Pakistan was fast deteriorating and India had entered into a defence pact with the USSR, President Yahya failed to obtain a firm commitment from either China or the US to come to Pakistan's military assistance in the event of aggression by India.

### **Para 9 to 11 not declassified**

Insofar as the role of the United Nations is concerned, our conclusion is that although this august body failed to prevent the dismemberment of Pakistan owing to the repeated use of the Soviet veto, yet a different result would have ensued if the dispute had been taken to the Security Council immediately after the Indian invasion of East Pakistan on 21st November, 1971, instead of allowing the situation to deteriorate with the commencement of all-out hostilities on the western front. The reasons, which prevented President Yahya Khan from going to the Security Council at this stage, namely, the fear of international insistence on political solution in East Pakistan and his misplaced confidence of achieving short-term gains in West Pakistan, are both found to be untenable in the context of the realities of the situation....

Another important aspect of this matter is that if the army generals in East Pakistan had not started transmitting messages of defeat and despair as early as 10th December, 1971, and if Gen. Yahya Khan as president of the country and commander-in-chief of the Pakistan army had shown a greater determination and courage and directed the eastern command to hold out somewhat longer than 16th December, 1971, the friends of Pakistan would thereby have been enabled to obtain a satisfactory resolution from the Security Council ordering a ceasefire in East Pakistan as well.

From the detailed analysis of the events in East Pakistan between 10th the 15th December, 1971, it does appear that the military situation was indeed critical, but we have seen that the battle had not yet been joined with the Indians for the defence of Dacca. With proper guidance from GHQ and a wise and courageous lead by the eastern command, it would have been possible to hold out for another two to three days, thus enabling the adoption of one of the resolutions acceptable to India and the Russians. An examination of the text of these last minute resolutions leaves no doubt that a ceasefire in accordance with their terms would have offered us an escape from the surrender and its inevitable consequences.

## **INTRODUCTION: REASONS FOR SUPPLEMENTARY REPORT**

This Commission of Inquiry was appointed by the President of Pakistan in Dec' 1971, to inquire into and find out "the circumstances in which the Commander, Eastern Command, surrendered and the members of the armed forces of Pakistan under his command laid down their arms and a ceasefire was ordered along the borders of West Pakistan and India and along the ceasefire line in the state of Jammu and Kashmir." After having examined 213 witnesses the Commission submitted its report in July 1972.

Before we submitted that report we did not have the evidence of most of the persons taken as prisoners of war including the major personalities, who played a part in the final events culminating in the Wrender in East Pakistan with the exception only of Maj-Gen Rahim. Although we did our best to re-construct the East Pakistan story with the help of such material, as was then available, inevitably our conclusions had to be of a tentative character. We also felt that since we had found reason adversely to comment upon the performance of some of the major figures involved it would have been unfair to pass any final judgement upon them without giving them an opportunity of explaining their own view point. For his reason we said that "our observations and conclusions regarding the surrender in East Pakistan and other allied matters should be regarded as provisional and subject to modification in the light of the evidence of the Commander, Eastern Command, and his senior officers as and when such evidence becomes available." (page 242 of the Main Report).

## **Commission reactivated**

Accordingly, after the prisoners of war and the civil personnel who had also been interned with the military personnel in India return to Pakistan, the federal government issued a notification directing "that the Commission shall start inquiry at a place and on a date to be fixed by it and complete the inquiry and submit its report to the President of Pakistan, with its findings as to the matters aforesaid, within a period of two months commencing from the date the Commission starts functioning." A copy of this notification is annexed as Annexure A to this chapter. Lt-Gen (retd) Altaf Qadir, who had also previously acted as Military Adviser to the Commission, was reappointed as such as also was Mr M A Latif as Secretary to the Commission. At the request of the Commission, the government also appointed Col M A Hassan as legal adviser.

The Commission issued a press release on June 1, 1974, offering an opportunity to the Prisoners of War and others repatriated from East Pakistan to furnish such information as might be within their knowledge and relevant to the purposes of the Commission. A copy of this press release is annexed as Annexure B to this chapter.

## **Proceedings**

Commission held an informal meeting at Lahore on the 3rd June, 1974, to consider various preliminary matters and then decided to resume proceedings at Abbottabad from the 16th July, 1974. In the meantime, a number of questionnaires were issued to various persons including particularly those who were at the helm of affairs in East Pakistan at the relevant time and others whom we considered likely to have relevant knowledge. Statements were also sent for from members of armed forces, civil services and the police services involved and we then proceeded after scrutiny of these statements to summon the witnesses. We recorded evidence of as many as 72 persons and these included particularly Lt-Gen A A K Niazi, Commander Eastern Command, Major Generals Farman Ali, Jamshed and the Generals who held during the relevant time commands of divisions, Rear Admiral Sharif, who was the senior most naval officer, Air Commodore Inam, the senior most air officer, and civilian personnel including the then Chief Secretary Mr Muzaffar Hussain and the Inspector General of Police Mr Mahmood Ali Chaudhry. Besides, Maj-Gen Rahim was re-examined. The only exception which was unavoidable was that of Dr Malik who till very nearly the end was the Governor of East Pakistan, but in his case also we had first-hand evidence of every important event and we,

therefore, now feel ourselves competent to submit our final conclusions.

After the examination of evidence the Commission finding itself unable to submit its report for a number of reasons by the 15th of September, 1974, asked for time which was extended till the 15th November, 1974, and again till the 30 November, 1974. At the conclusion of the recording of evidence on the 5th September, 1974, we had to disperse principally because two of us were required to attend the special session of the Supreme Court at Karachi from the 9th to the 21st September, 1974, and the President had also to proceed to Geneva. We, therefore, re-assembled on the 23rd of October, 1974, at Abbottabad to prepare this supplement to our main report.

### **Scheme of the Supplementary Report**

In general although we have examined a considerable volume of fresh evidence we have found no reason whatsoever to modify the conclusions that we reached and stated in the Main Report; if anything by reason of more detailed information we are confirmed in those conclusions. We, therefore, propose to avoid a repetition of what we stated in the Main Report except to some slight degree necessary for re-stating briefly some of the conclusions with which we are principally concerned in this supplement. There are also some matters upon which our information was then scanty if not negligible and, these we, therefore, propose to deal with in some detail. We do, however, propose to write this supplement, following the same pattern as far as is practicable, as we did in the main report. In Part-II of that report we dealt with the political background and to this we now intend to add only matters which occurred in 1971, or to be more specific on and after the 25th March, 1971. We have nothing to add to Part-III of the Main Report dealing with international relations. As to Part-IV we propose to say nothing in regard to the military aspect in as far as it concerned West Pakistan except to a limited extent as to its repercussions in East Pakistan and as to some controversy that has been raised before us as to the wisdom of opening the Western Front at all. Of necessity in this part, however we shall deal in greater detail with the matters dealt with in Chapters II, III, IV, V, VI, VII, VIII and IX of the Main Report in so far as they concern East Pakistan. We then propose to deal with the subject of discipline of the armed forces in East Pakistan which would include the question of alleged military atrocities in East Pakistan. We shall of necessity, mainly in this part, have to deal with the individual conduct of several persons though aspects of this will emerge from

earlier Chapters. We shall then need to discuss some evidence which has come before us suggesting that there were during the period of captivity in India concerted efforts on the part of some high officers to present a consistent, if not necessarily accurate, account of what took place. We propose finally to wind up this supplement by making our recommendations.

#### **Annexure 'A'**

## **Government of Pakistan Cabinet Secretariat (Cabinet Division) Rawalpindi, the 25th May, 1974**

No. 107/19/74-Min. Whereas the Commission of Inquiry appointed under the late Ministry of Presidential Affairs' Notification No. 632 (1)/71, dated, the 26th December, 1971, had, in its report of the 8th July, 1972, submitted, inter alia, that the Commission's findings with regard to the course of events in East Pakistan were only tentative and recommended that "as and when the Commander Eastern Command and other senior-officers now prisoners of war in India are available, a further Inquiry, should be held into the circumstances which led to the surrender in East Pakistan. And whereas all the prisoners of war and civil internees have now returned to Pakistan;

And whereas the federal government is of the opinion that it is necessary in the light of the recommendations of the Commission of Inquiry to finalize the said inquiry as to the circumstances which led to the surrender in East Pakistan, after examining any of the said prisoners of war and civil internees whose examination is considered necessary by the Commission;

Now, therefore, in exercise of the powers conferred by sub-section (I) of Section 3 of the Pakistan Commissions of Inquiry Act, 1956 (VI of 1956), the federal government is pleased to direct that the Commission shall start inquiry at a place and on a date to be fixed by it and complete the inquiry and submit its report to the President of Pakistan, with its findings as to the matter aforesaid, within a period of two months commencing from the date the Commission starts functioning.

Sd/-  
Vaqar Ahmad,  
Cabinet Secretary.

## **Annexure 'B'**

## **Lahore, the 1st June, 1974. Press release**

The War Inquiry Commission which has been asked by the Government of Pakistan to resume its deliberations and submit a final report was appointed by the then President of Pakistan, Mr Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, on the 26th December, 1971, to enquire into the circumstances in which the Commander, Eastern Command surrendered and the members of the armed forces of Pakistan under his command laid down their arms and ceasefire was ordered along the borders of West Pakistan and India and along the ceasefire line in the State of Jammu and Kashmir. The Commission is headed by the Chief Justice of Pakistan, Mr Justice Hamoodur Rahman. The other two members of the Commission are Mr Justice S Anwarul Haq, Judge, Supreme Court of Pakistan and Mr Justice Tufail Ali Abdur Ralunan, Chief Justice of Sind and Baluchistan High Court. Lt-Gen (retd) Altaf Qadir and Mr M A Latif, Assistant Registrar of the Supreme Court of Pakistan are military adviser and Secretary of the Commission respectively.

The Commission which had started its proceedings in camera in Rawalpindi on the 1st of February, 1972, recorded evidence of 213 witnesses. It had submitted its report to the then Resident of Pakistan on the, 12th July, 1972. In the report the Commission had observed that its findings with regard to the causes of surrender in East Pakistan were only tentative. It, therefore, recommenced that as and when the Commander, Eastern Command; and other senior officers who were in India at that time were available, a further inquiry should be held into the circumstances which led to the surrender in East Pakistan. Now that all the prisoners of war and civil internees have returned to Pakistan, the government has asked the Commission to complete this part of its inquiry.

A temporary office of the Commission has been set up in the Supreme Court

building at Lahore and the Commission has decided that before commencing its proceedings at a place to be announced later on, the members of the public, civil services and the armed forces who were either prisoners of war in India or were otherwise repatriated from East Pakistan should be given an opportunity to furnish to the Commission such relevant information as may be within their knowledge relating to the causes of surrender in East Pakistan. This information should be submitted in writing, preferably 5 copies, as briefly as possible by the 30th June, 1974, at the latest to the Secretary of the Inquiry Commission, do Supreme Court of Pakistan, Lahore. The informant should also state whether he will be willing to appear before the Commission.

All such information and particulars of the persons giving the information will be strictly confidential. It may be mentioned that according to a public announcement of the Government of Pakistan published in newspapers on the 11th January, 1972, all proceedings before the Commission would be in camera and the statements made before and addressed to it would be absolutely privileged and would not render a person making any such statement liable to any civil or criminal proceedings except when such statement is false. The Commission is empowered to call before it any citizen of Pakistan to seek information. The Commission can if necessary even issue warrants to secure the attendance of any person unless he is otherwise exempted by law from personal appearance before a Court. The serving personnel of defence services who are willing to give evidence before the Commission should have no apprehension of victimization for assisting the Commission in its task.

## **PART-II POLITICAL EVENTS OF 1971**

### **INTRODUCTION**

We have already dealt in great detail with the second Martial Law of the Yahya Regime in Chapter VI of Part II of the Main Report and in order to lead up to the subsequent political events we find it necessary to recapitulate as briefly as possible some of the conclusions which we stated.

In paragraph 3 of Chapter VI of Part II of the Main Report (Page 67) after quoting the broadcast which he made on that date we said "Gen. Yahya was, therefore, committed to the role of a mere care-taker who would restore law and order in the country within the shortest possible time thereafter offer the government to a set of duly elected representatives. Of course, in the context of

things this would mean the enactment of a new Constitution either by promulgation by himself or by setting up some kind of machinery to frame one."

As we said law and order was quickly restored and, therefore, the next task, namely, that of providing of a constitution had to be taken up and for this purpose the General ordered elections under the Legal Framework. Order which he promulgated. For reasons which we discussed at length we came to the conclusion that it was fairly clear that the Awami League would emerge victorious in East Pakistan and the Pakistan Peoples Party in West Pakistan (Page 74 and 76 of the Report). The remarkable thing, however, is, as we concluded, that this was not a result anticipated by the government though we are quite unable to see how it could have come to any such conclusion. The other peculiar feature of this two-party victory was that the Awami League had almost all the seats in East Pakistan and the Pakistan Peoples Party an overwhelming majority in West Pakistan.

Moreover the Awami League had also an overall majority in the country because the principle of parity had been given. But at the same time neither party had even minimum support in the other wing.

The necessity of negotiations was obvious but right from the start for a number of reasons which we do not repeat but amongst which certainly figures predominantly the unrealistic and perhaps fraudulent manner in which the President himself conducted the negotiations, it was obvious, that negotiations would finally fail though it does not appear that they were formally declared to have failed on the 25th March, 1971. In the meantime, however, from the 1st March up to this date Sheikh Mujibur Rahman set up what virtually amounted to a parallel government in East Pakistan if not with the encouragement of the President at any rate with his connivance. On page 87 of the Main Report we have set out the directive which Sheikh Mujibur Rahman issued and to which he added from time to time. These clearly show that the Sheikh was being allowed to go from strength to strength with impunity. We were then at a loss to understand, as we still are, as to how a government worth the name could so abdicate authority and allow an organized mob rule to prevail taking no action to protect the life, property and honour of the citizens. The passivity with which the government had allowed the Awami League campaign to continue and the culmination of the state of affairs by this reign of terror took away the sympathies of those who were otherwise in favour of a united Pakistan and was calculated in any case to terrify such people into accepting the Awami League rule as also those who had not the courage to oppose the political aim for which

it stood. The beginning then of the political events of the period in question was not only the utter failure to recapture the sympathies of the wavering people but actively to drive them into the opposite camp. This was the prelude to the military action of 25th March, 1971.

### **MILITARY ACTION AND NEED TO NEGOTIATE**

How much so ever we may blame the government for allowing the situation to come to this unfortunate pass, if to Gen. Yahya is to be attributed a continued intention of restoring a civil order of government then, in any case, the only possible wise action which a government could take, was of necessity immediately to restore governmental authority in East Pakistan. The situation bears a very close analogy to that declared to be existing on the 26th March, 1969, in as much as again as a preliminary to reversion to normal political life, to quote his own words in the broadcast of back date, Gen. Yahya's "first and foremost task as the Chief Martial Law Administrator, therefore, was to bring back sanity and ensure that the administration resumes its normal functions to the satisfaction of the people." Regarded in this light the military action of the 25th March, 1971, was a political step. It was certainly not war and was not at that stage even counter-insurgency into which we had to enter at a later stage.

The civilian administration of the country no doubt had been taken over by a military dictatorship but that, nevertheless, was a civil government functioning no doubt under the protection and control of a military dictatorship but military dictatorship was avowedly for a temporary purpose with the object of restoration of civilian government and not with self perpetuation as its object. That we have found as a fact that the real intention of Gen. Yahya and his immediate coterie was not honest is entirely beside the point. The military action of the 25th March, 1971, can be justified, therefore, only as a political step which of necessity must be a preliminary to further political steps intended to normalize government. It was not an end in itself but only a means to an end. The first question that then arises is how soon after military action had been taken could the next steps in the political settlement have been taken. The question whether at such a time the persons with whom alone such negotiations could have taken place were available to us, is of course, a different matter with which we shall deal immediately hereafter, as we shall with the steps that were taken, or, as we prefer to regard them, pretended to be taken for such negotiations.

We have already in the Main Report discussed at some length India's aims

of which she made no secret, namely, finally the dismemberment of Pakistan and immediately the setting up of independent Bangladesh in place of the province of East Pakistan. This, by itself, was a strong reason for making all efforts to reach an early political settlement.

There has come before us a very large body of evidence of people, both military and civil present in East Pakistan at the relevant time who not only thought that a political solution was a necessity but also, that well before war the climate for such a settlement had come into existence. Nobody can now pretend that after our military action of the 25th March, 1971, the arrest of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and Dr Kamal Hussain and the public declaration of the former by President Yahya as a traitor a solution could have been found which was from the point of view of the ideology of an integrated Pakistan ideal but a comparatively palatable solution, most certainly one without loss of honour and human life could have found for keeping the country under one flag. Assuredly, the disgrace which we suffered and which we have now the misfortune to examine could have been avoided.

The result of the military action was swift, although evidence differs as to how complete it was and how early its effects were felt. All allowance being given to natural human difference of opinion on such a subject we have ourselves come to the conclusion that by the end of May 1971, at least such a situation had been reached and that, perhaps with diminishing hope, had continued at least up to the end of September 1971. Evidence also does seem to indicate that at no time could it be said that complete normalcy and complete governmental authority and control over the entire province had been restored but clearly fairly early resistance had been broken.

The evidence of Mr Muzaffar Hussain (Witness No 214) who went to Dacca on the 21st March, 1971, in his capacity as Secretary of National Assembly, is that on that day the city was under curfew and there was little movement of life as such except total disobedience. A little later when he returned on the 6th April, 1971 (i.e. after military action had been taken), he got the impression that Dacca was a dead city and in elaboration he said:-

"There was no movement on the streets at all except the airport which was full of refugees -thousands of people in the corridors, in the verandahs, everywhere trying to get out but in the town itself there was curfew. I cannot say whether there was actually curfew but there were troops posted all over and there was no movement from the airport to

the government house."

By May 1971, although he agreed that law and order had not been restored the authorities had by and large acquired control over the territory. In the month of July 1971, he said that there was a real lull and he gave his opinion that that was the time in August when negotiations could have been held.

Mr M A K Chaudhry (Witness No 219) who took over as Inspector General of Police, East Pakistan on the 15th May, 1971, said:

"Sir the military action which was started on the 25th of March had been completed. The major portion of the East Pakistan territory had been retrieved from the occupation of the rebels and mopping up operations were in progress. Some portions of the territory particularly in the north of Rangpur district and Dinajpur district were still in the occupation of the rebels from which they were never dislodged. The rebel activity was continuing although it was in a low key." In his view a political settlement was feasible right up to the end of September or even early October. He mentioned that this was frequently talked about particularly with late Mr Nurul Amin who often used to send for him. The late Mr Nurul Amin was one of the very few non-Awami Leaguers who were elected to the National Assembly and that he was a veteran statesman who still commanded a very high respect admits, of course, of no doubt. We might explain the particular reason why the witness could speak to the late Mr Nurul Amin was that he had served under the latter's government in East Pakistan earlier. This view of the witness finds corroboration from what the late Mr Nurul Amin himself deposed before us in our first session. The witness spoke also of similar conversations with other well known political personalities including Mr Habibur Rahman, Maulvi Farid Ahmad and Mr Sabur Khan.

Similarly, Mr S M Nawab (witness No 220) who became DIG Police, Headquarters, in Dacca on the 12th July, 1971, said that political settlement was, by no means, impossible and certainly that the most opportune time was till June.

Syed Alamdar Raza (witness No 226) who took over as Commissioner of Dacca on the 23rd May, 1971, thought that in May and June by and large, the

general population was in a mood to desire reconciliation but that chance gradually receded thereafter.

Mr Humayun Faiz Rasool (witness No 229) who became Secretary Information on the 20th May, 1971, although himself subscribing to the view that a political solution was both desirable and possible told us that from conversations with army officers he found that most, though not all, thought that force alone was the answer. Nor is the view that a political solution should at all costs have been attempted, supported merely by civilian officials. Almost all the senior military officers have expressed themselves before us as thinking similarly. Indeed it was a part of the grievance of most of them that a military solution was being sought, quite illogically, to what was clearly and essentially a political problem. There is an under-current of a feeling throughout their evidence that their task was made impossible by this confusion and even perversion of thought. It is impossible, indeed unnecessary, to quote all the voluminous evidence on this point but we might content ourselves by quoting some of the senior military officers who have said so.

Even General Niazi (witness No 285) himself in his written statement has said:

"The troops in East Pakistan, on March 25, 1971, were ordered to convert a political debacle into a military victory. They achieved this objective within a short span of time and by June 1971, they had brought the situation sufficiently under control to enable the government to launch a political campaign for reconciliation between the two wings of the country. There were no overall political objectives or national policy or national strategy to deal with the insurgency in East Pakistan. The high command failed to reap the fruits of our early military successes in East Pakistan. On the contrary, the enemy made full use of this period and prepared herself to undo the order restored by the military action by organizing a war of rebellion and follow it up with coup de grace "to liberate Bangladesh."

His Chief of Staff Brig G M Baqir Siddiqui (witness No 218) said that although governmental authority was not restored in June, but by then resistance had certainly been broken and he went on to complain of being saddled with a political problem to which a military solution was being sought.

Brig M A Naeem (witness No 237) although he did not mention specific

dates, said that once normalcy had obtained, clearly implying that it did obtain at sometime, a political solution should have been sought, but he candidly said that in his opinion there was no intention to seek a political settlement.

Similarly, Brig Bashir Ahmed (witness No 245) was of the same view and gave the period May/June as the appropriate time.

Brig Iftikhar Ahmed Rana (witness No 249) also emphasized that a political solution was a must and that the climate was ripe for it by the middle of May or at any rate the 3rd week of that month.

Brig M Saleemullah (witness No 250) when asked whether the amnesty given (to which we shall presently refer) was not belated not only agreed but said that the stage both for that and for negotiations was soon after the military action was over which we think means about the beginning of May.

Brig S A Hassan (witness No 251) went even further and said that not even in September was it too late and that he expressly advised a political solution but the Commander-in-Chief was insistent upon a military solution.

So also Brig Saadullah Khan (witness No 253) thought that it could easily have been attempted till September.

Brig Atta Mohammad Khan Malik (witness No 257) said that the time for amnesty was in August because we were then getting the upper hand and that there was a definite need for restoring civil power but he expressly said that the change of the governor at that time was a mistake. According to him, the selection of a civilian as a governor meant nothing, and by need for restoring civil power, he meant restoring it to Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and not giving it to Dr Malik, but really he thought that all these things came rather late and the proper period was April or May.

Brig S M If Atif (witness No 255) gave us another angle to the picture when he said that even in November it was not true that the population was totally against us and that a poll in Calcutta revealed that only 40 per cent were for Bangladesh. He explained, and we see reason in the explanation that the older generation imbued, as they still were, with the ideology of Pakistan and memories of the struggle for it continued to adhere to that faith and it was only the younger generation largely ignorant of these matters, who were swayed from these ideas.

One of the most senior army officers in Dacca at that time, Maj-Gen Mohammad Jamshed (witness No 246) also gave it as his opinion that by May political solution may well have been attempted. It is a curious reflection, perhaps not merely on the mental attitude of this officer but upon military

officers in general, of course, with some exceptions, that he says that he did not say so to anybody. This is all the more remarkable when we read the following passage from his evidence:

"Question: In the light of events which have now occurred and of which you had informed to higher Generals at that time would you agree with me that there was no intention on the part of any one in the Martial Law set up to really achieve a democratic state? Witness: To start with I think that was not the intention of Martial Law authorities. This my personal view. I always carried the impression that the intention was to achieve a democratic state and that is why the elections, which, I can say with all the conviction and emphasis were held in fair manner.

President: Since you were a part of the set up were you and your colleagues thinking that in this democratic pattern, if introduced, the politicians will come in bits and pieces, in small groups and parties with which you will be able to deal as you please. Would I be correct in thinking that. In other words you wanted a democratic pattern which would be subordinate to you and would act as you wished it to act?

Witness: I never thought on those lines. I certainly thought that this is going to take time before a real democracy properly works." It might be added, however, that according to Rear Admiral Sharif, Gen. Jamshed is by nature somewhat reserved and averse to expressing any opinion.

From among the military officers the person who has given his opinions on political matters at the greatest length is Maj-Gen Rao Farman Ali (witness No 284) and this is perhaps understandable as he had a great deal to do with such matters. The witness had been posted in East Pakistan long before the Martial Law but upon the promulgation of Martial Law on the 25th March, 1969, he took over as Brigadier, later Major General, Civil Affairs and held this appointment till 24th July, 1971. From that date up to the 3rd September, 1971, he was Major General Political Affairs and, finally, until the end, adviser to the governor. As he has emphasised in the written statement he was not military adviser to the governor. He claims that he was never in a position to frame policy or make decisions and although it is clear that he could have played a part in policy making it must be admitted that his powers were confined to advise

only but this he did freely. Throughout his statement and before us he has repeatedly said that he was not only in favour of a political solution but also definitely against military action. As we have said however in the context of what we are now discussing we do not regard the military action of the 25th March, 1971 as a military one in the sense of a military campaign but in the sense of the armed forces coming to the aid of civil power and therefore regard that as a political step in itself a preliminary to further political steps. It is worth quoting his views on what normalcy means and why-military action was taken. He states in his written statement:-

- What is normalcy? Normalcy, to my way of thinking, exists when:-
  - The writ of the government runs over its entire territorial limits.
  - Law and order situation is such that people can go about doing their work as they do every day without fear.
  - Government institutions, as established by law, are in a position to perform their assigned functions in accordance with laws and rules of the state.
  - Communications—road, railway, air, post and telegraph and connected installations and facilities are functioning normally.
  - People are in a position to carry on the business of commerce and trade, education and social activities.
  - Problems of the people are attended to.
- Immediately after the announcement of the postponement of NA session normalcy did not exist. Military action was taken to regain control of the government and it was hoped that the other factors contributing to the restoration of normalcy would flow naturally. Unfortunately, due to pre-planned rebellious act of the Awami League situation as existed immediately after the military action was as follows:-
  - Major portion of the territory of East Pakistan was in rebels' hands. With that law and order situation was out of the control of the legal government. Police and EPR had actively supported the rebellion. We were without the most essential elements required to restore first phase of normalcy.
    - Civil servants were also actively associated with the Awami League. A large number had either fled to India, either out of imagined fear or voluntarily, or had left their places of work and moved out to the country side. The civil government was paralysed, if not non-existent.
    - Communications had been badly disrupted due to sabotage, blowing of bridges, culverts and installations by the rebels. There were problems

of movement of food and essential commodities both from within and outside.

- Educational institutions were the main centres of agitation and resistance. Most of them remained closed for a long time.
- It was difficult to apply normal laws of the country, proper legal procedures of arrests, trial and convictions had disappeared and their restoration made extremely difficult without existence of a police force."

He goes on after stating what steps were taken to say:-

- The ultimate goal in the limited context of normalcy could only be to restore the confidence of the people in the government to win their support to isolate the rebels and also to win them over. In this the parties involved were:-
  - The President and the central government of Pakistan.
  - The governor and the provincial government of East Pakistan.
  - The Army.
- The ultimate goal could only be achieved by political actions which only the president could initiate. The actual operators in the field were the army. The Governor could only lay down policies in the limited sphere of establishment of normalcy. His effectiveness in the overall sense was limited. Even then normalcy was established in about two months after the military action. But for the indirect and later direct intervention of India we could have held elections, brought in some sort of representative civil government and gradually work out a workable solution to live together."

It is clear from this that in his view too, such normalcy, as was needed for negotiations, was established by the end of May 1971.

We have, therefore, come to the conclusion that it is entirely an untenable theory to put forward that at no point of time was the government able to establish sufficient authority to be able to negotiate *i.e.* to negotiate from a position of comparative strength. Of course to negotiate earlier from a position not merely of weakness but almost of utter helplessness would have been merely to capitulate and hardly to negotiate. We are also not saying that at any time such a position of strength was gained that a solution could be dictated, nor do we think it right, that it should, even, have been attempted to be dictated. In any event the declared purpose of Gen. Yahya, right from the start, was to do no such thing.

## **FEASIBILITY OF NEGOTIATIONS**

The question then arises; negotiate with whom? It has been claimed that with all the goodwill possible there was nobody with whom contact could be established, for the purpose of negotiations. We shall come later to the so-called attempted political negotiations not with the elected representatives of the people or the people who could really answer for the people of East Pakistan nor can we see any distinction between these two classes. The only persons with whom negotiations could usefully be carried on must have been either with the main body of the elected representatives or their leaders and it is claimed that neither of these were available to government. An amnesty was offered in August but the evidence is clear and we have no reason to doubt that although there was some response to this amnesty it was so poor as to be negligible. Many causes, some, no doubt not of our own making, were responsible for this and among these principally the fact that the Indian authorities were by no means willing to allow the elected representatives to cross back into Pakistan. This should have been no surprise to us, since these were valuable hostages in the hands of India.

2. We do not, however, think that this was a conclusive obstacle. It was possible through international agencies to contact many of these persons. There is evidence on the record to suggest that such avenues were open. The most difficult thing however for us to understand is how this difficulty could be claimed when Sheikh Mujibur Rahman himself the undisputed leader of the Awami League was a prisoner in West Pakistan as also was Dr Kamal Hussain one of his trusted-confidantes who still is a member of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman's cabinet in Bangladesh. Gen. Yahya however had not only declared Sheikh Mujibur Rahman a traitor but had even commenced his trial. His obduracy of thought if not the dishonesty of motives is apparent from the fact that when we examined him before the submission of the Main Report he said he could not possibly countenance negotiations with a traitor. The General showed a naivete of thought if he really meant what he said. History, including the history of this subcontinent is replete with examples of people not only tried but convicted for treason and serving out sentences called out from the prisons for negotiations and, if these negotiations were successful, installed in political power. To take no less an example the independence of the two countries of India and Pakistan itself is a characteristic case.

## **CIVILIANIZATION OF THE ADMINISTRATION**

Soon after some degree of control had been restored the so-called civilianization of the government was attempted. For a variety of reasons we can neither understand what was meant by this nor what was intended to be achieved thereby and we think that the attempt was foredoomed to failure and indeed, futile. What was actually done was to send from West Pakistan a number of persons including persons in high civilian ranks to run the civil government. (In addition a large number of persons of the police force were also sent but this is hardly a part of the civilianization. It was intended merely to replace losses caused by desertion and the understandable lack of faith in the loyalty of Bengali personnel of equivalent rank). In the first place, although not all officers have admitted this, West Pakistan officers were unwilling to go and we do not ascribe this to simple fear but in the greater majority of cases to a full understanding that this was a futile exercise. If the purpose was to regain the confidence of the people by attempting to show that the government was being run by civil authorities then clearly it was ill-conceived in design. The appointment of high-ranking civil officers in place of those who had deserted their jobs could hardly give the impression to the Bengali mind that the military was intending to give up government or at least to relax its control over it. By this time regrettably but quite inevitably in the mind of the people military dictatorship had become synonymous with Western domination. Inextricably woven with this impression was the feeling fanned by Awami League propaganda for what virtually amounted to secession. The taste, however, bitter in some respects, of the short rule unofficially but effectively by Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and the military action that followed had had its own effect. The mere fact, therefore, that senior officials belonging to the civil administration were put in key posts could not seriously be expected to make any real difference. For the matter of that it has been admitted that Mr Shafiul Azam, the Bengali Chief Secretary, who was the immediate predecessor of Mr Muzaffar Hussain was effective and yet that did not seem to have had any material effect on the course of events. Mr Muzaffar Hussain himself has indeed said (in answer to a question from the President of the Commission whether after having become the Chief Secretary he could say that the political situation was not his concern):

"No, Sir, it was certainly my concern. First and foremost I was sent on the clear understanding that there would be a civil government. Secondly, I was given an assurance that there would be a political settlement, and thirdly, I was told that the Awami League would once

again be invited back and if they did not come there would be bye-elections and those in the Assembly would meet on the 19th December and that on the 19th December having started the assembly I would be relieved and Mr Rab would take over from me. Immediately on taking over I had a long discussion with Dr Malik. Strangely enough, although he had been in government so long, I had never met him till his swearing-in ceremony in Dacca. He told me that he had specifically asked for me—that is what Gen. Yahya had also told me. We had a long discussion and I was convinced in my mind that nothing was further from Dr Malik's mind but to hand over power to an elected government immediately and to quit. He said it quite clearly that he was there only for 3 to 4 months and that he was too old to continue any longer and that this was his last assignment."

In the event, however, Mr Muzaffar Hussain's role was not really very effective and another very senior official, namely, Mr M A K Chaudhry has said so very clearly as also has Syed Alamdar Raza, the Commissioner of Dacca. Syed Khalid Mahmood (witness No 227) who was posted as Commissioner Chittagong has put it even more emphatically when he says that although in July the time for political settlement was favourable, the so-called move to civilianize the administration when made was not wise, for the announcement by Gen. Yahya that he was getting a constitution drafted by his own experts was disastrous.

3. Many more witnesses can be quoted to much the same effect, but in reality, as we have seen, this could not be otherwise. It might be useful at this stage to say something about the allegations that have been made of the conflict between the civil servants and the Martial Law/Military authorities. These officials almost unanimously have said that they were not allowed to function while it has been the claim of the Martial Law authorities that they were themselves unwilling to shoulder responsibility. There is an element of truth in both these versions which are not really irreconcilable. In the first place it has to be remembered that most of these officers were unwilling to go to East Pakistan. Secondly, by this time in the past Pakistani mind West Pakistan and military dictatorship had become almost synonymous terms and the mere fact, therefore, that the administration was to be handled by civilian officers drawn from West Pakistan could not make any real difference. In truth also these officers could not

under the very disturbed conditions, then prevailing, have been effective. It is true that some officers did their best to go out into the districts, but without military escort it was in most cases nearly impossible for them to act on their own. The entire country including West Pakistan was under a military dictatorship and the civilian administration, therefore, even though not necessarily sympathetic to a military dictatorship, was of necessity only the instrument of military power.

Allegations have been made and denied of personal rudeness sometimes even at the highest level towards civilian officer, but a conflict in the context of the circumstances was perhaps inevitable. On the one hand was the feeling of frustration of officers experienced in civil administration unable or prevented from doing their jobs and on the other the responsibility which the Martial Law administration had willingly or unwillingly to bear in respect of civil administration.

It has been denied almost unanimously even by the officials that there was any rudeness or courtesy shown to them by senior military officials though there is a notable exception well authenticated of Gen. Jamshed being rude in the extreme and even arrogant to Mr M A K Chaudhry who, however, patiently bore it and Gen. Jamshed is later said to have made amends. But this is only an exception, courtesies at a lower level were inherent in the situation.

The fact that Dr Malik was then appointed as a Governor, in fact at that time the only civilian Governor in any province in Pakistan again meant really nothing. Veteran statesman though he was commanding a high degree of wide respect, as he undoubtedly did, he could hardly in the charged political circumstances be described as a persons enjoying the confidence of the masses. It is not as if one of the accepted leaders of the East Pakistan population, *i.e.* accepted in the course of election—had been appointed. He had little real control over affairs; there was not only Martial Law but there were during his period of office to start with semi-belligerent and later fully belligerent conditions in the province. He was no doubt the personal representative of the President, but he was not, it has to be emphasised, the personal representative of the Chief Martial Law Administrator. He had moreover a Major General Political Affairs to 'advise him and while we have no doubt that that Adviser, namely, Maj-Gen Rao Farman Ali kept strictly within the proper bounds of his responsibilities undoubtedly Martial Law orders prevailed over the Governor's orders. Only towards the very end did he exercise what might be called his powers as a personal representative of the President and that, as we shall see when we deal

with the question of surrender, had disastrous effects for which, we hasten to add, he was by no means to be blamed.

## CONCLUSION

This Commission of Inquiry was appointed by the President of Pakistan in Dec 1971. After examining 213 witnesses, we submitted the main report in July 1972. However, at that time we did not have before us the evidence of the major personalities, except Maj-Gen M Rahim Khan, who had played a part in the final events culminating in the surrender in East Pakistan. Accordingly, we stated that "our observations and conclusions regarding the surrender in East Pakistan and other allied matters should be regarded as provisional and subject to modification in the light of the evidence of the Commander, Eastern Command, and other senior officers as and when such evidence becomes available."

After the repatriation of prisoners of war from India, the Commission was reactivated in May 1974. At the resumed session, we have examined as many as 72 persons, including Lt-Gen A A K Niazi, Commander, Eastern Command, all the Major Generals and Brigadiers who had served in East Pakistan, Rear Admiral Sharif, Flag Officer Commanding the Pakistan Navy, Air Commodore Inam, the senior most Air Force officer, and several civilian officers like the Chief Secretary, the Inspector General of Police, two divisional commissioners etc. Maj-Gen M Rahim Khan was re-examined at his own request.

As it appeared to us that the defeat suffered by the armed forces of Pakistan was not merely the result of military factors alone, but had been brought about as the cumulative result of political, international, moral and military factors, we examined all these aspects in our main report at some length. We have followed the same pattern of study in the present supplementary report. Although we are now naturally in possession of far more detailed information as to the events in East Pakistan, yet the main conclusions reached by us on the earlier occasion have remained unaffected by the fresh evidence now available. In the paragraphs that follow, we intend briefly to summarise our conclusions on these major aspects of the causes of surrender in Eat Pakistan, making reference, wherever necessary, to the conclusions already embodied in the main report.

### **Political background**

In the main report, we have traced the genesis of the Pakistan movement, the

events preceding the establishment of Pakistan, and the political developments which took place between 1947 and 1971, including a detailed study of the effects of the two Martial Law periods in hastening the process of political and emotional isolation of East Pakistan from West Pakistan.

We have also in the main report, examined at length the role played by the two major political parties, namely, the Awami League in East Pakistan and the Pakistan Peoples Party in West Pakistan, to bringing about the situation resulting in the postponement of the session of the National Assembly scheduled to be held at: Bacca on the 3rd of March, 1971. We have then examined the events occurring between the 1st and the 25th of March, 1971, when the Awami League had seized power from the government of Gen. Yahya Khan, necessitating resort to the military action of the 25th of March, 1971. We have also touched upon the negotiations which Gen. Yahya Khan was pretending to hold during this period with Sheikh Mujibur Rahman on the one hand and political leaders from West Pakistan on the other. Although he never formally declared these negotiations to have failed yet he secretly left Dacca on the evening of the 25th of March, 1971, leaving instructions behind for military action to be initiated when his plane reached the Karachi area.

We have found as a result of a detailed analysis of the events surrounding the imposition of the second Martial Law by Gen. Yahya Khan on the 25th of March, 1969, that he did not take over the country in order merely to restore normal conditions and re-introduce the democratic process. He did so with a view to obtaining personal power and those who assisted him did so with full knowledge of his intentions. The fresh evidence recorded by us has only served to strengthen this conclusion as to the intentions of Gen. Yahya Khan.

All the senior army commanders, who were concerned with the administration of Martial Law in East Pakistan, as well as the senior civil servants who were inducted into the civil administration in East Pakistan, have expressed the view that military action could not have been substitute for a political settlement, which was feasible once law and order had been restored within a matter of a few weeks after the military action. Most of these witnesses have stated that the most favourable time for a political settlement was between the months of May and September 1971, during which a reasonable amount of normalcy had been restored, and the authority of the government had been re-established at least in most of the urban areas, if not throughout the countryside. However, no effort was made during these months to start a political dialogue with the elected representatives of the people of East Pakistan; instead fraudulent

and useless measures were adopted.

The use of excessive force during the military action and the conduct of some of the officers and men of the Pakistan Army during the sweep operations had only served to alienate the sympathies of the people of East Pakistan. The practice of the troops living off the land, in the absence of a proper organisation of their own logistic arrangements during their operations in the countryside, encouraged the troops to indulge in looting. The arbitrary methods adopted by the Martial Law administration in dealing with respectable East Pakistanis, and their sudden disappearances by a process euphemistically called "being sent to Bangladesh" made matters worse. The attitude of the army authorities towards the Hindu minority also resulted in a large-scale exodus to India. The avowed intention of India to dismember Pakistan was only too well known, but even then the need for early political settlement was not realized by Gen. Yahya Khan. The general amnesty declared by him in August 1971, proved ineffective, as it was declared too late, and left much to be desired in its implementation. It did not result in the return of any appreciable number of the elected representatives of the people, who were in any case valuable hostages in the hands of the Indian authorities who did not allow them to cross back into Pakistan.

Precious months were thus wasted, during which the Indians mounted their training programme for the Mukti Bahini and started guerillas raids into Pakistan territory. Gen. Yahya Khan then embarked upon his scheme of bye-elections in place of the disqualified Awami League representatives, but these by-elections were an exercise in futility, for the reason that they were supervised and controlled by the Martial Law administration, and even the selection of the candidates was being made by a Major General of the Pakistan Army. In these circumstances, these newly elected representatives did not have any authority to speak on behalf of the people.

Similarly, the appointment of Dr Malik as the civilian Governor of East Pakistan, and the installation of his ministers, did not produce any impact. These gentlemen did not command the confidence of the people although Dr Malik was personally respected as a veteran statesman. These attempts at civilianization of the Government of East Pakistan were, therefore, an utter failure in winning back the confidence of the people. Power continued to vest in the hands of the Zonal Martial Law Administrator, namely, Lt-Gen A A K Niazi. In any case, in view of the circumstances then prevailing, namely, the overriding importance of maintaining law and order and keeping the lines of communication open, the

role of the army continued to be predominant.

Apart, therefore, from the immorality and political inexpediency of the kind of military action taken by Gen.. Yahya Khan on the 25th of March, 1971, it was his culpable failure to arrive at a political settlement with the Awami League during the crucial months preceding the war that completely alienated the sympathies of the population of East Pakistanis, confirming their suspicion that the Generals were not prepared to part with political power in favour of the elected representatives of the people.

The refusal of Gen. Yahya Khan to negotiate with the Awami League becomes all the more significant when we remember that two of its top leaders, namely, Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and Dr Kamal Hussain were in his custody in West Pakistan, and that almost all the friendly countries had advised him to arrive at a political settlement in view of the looming Indian threat of military action.

The two direct and devastating consequences of this political situation brought about by the military regime itself, since holding the elections of 1970, were the prolonged involvement of the Pakistan Army in counter-insurgency measures throughout the province, and its forced deployment in penny-packets all along the borders of East Pakistan to prevent infiltration of Mukti Bahini and Indian agents. In the presence of these two factors, the Pakistan Army was obviously fighting a losing battle from the very start.

## **International aspect**

After exhaustively reviewing the state of our international relations as they existed immediately preceding the war, we had expressed the opinion, in the main report, that in the background of our relations with India ever since 1947 it should not have been too difficult to appreciate that India would do every thing to precipitate a crisis in East Pakistan.

We also took note of the various efforts made by India to internationalize the refugee problem which had arisen as a result of the exodus of people from East Pakistan to India in the wake of the military action. The Indian propaganda was so successful that all efforts made by the military regime in Pakistan to defuse the situation in East Pakistan left the world unimpressed. The situation was further complicated by the mutual assistance treaty signed between India and USSR in August 1971. All the governments friendly to Pakistan, especially, Iran, China and the USA, had made it clear to Gen. Yahya Khan that they would

not be in a position to render any physical assistance to Pakistan in the event of an armed conflict with India. However, the significance of this international situation was unfortunately completely lost on Gen. Yahya Khan and his associates. They blundered ahead, oblivious of the fatal consequences of their international isolation.'

In the main report we also dealt with the activities at the United Nations during the critical days of the war, and came to the conclusion that there was no rational explanation why Gen. Yahya Khan did not take the dispute to the Security Council immediately after the Indian invasion of East Pakistan on Nov 21, 1971, nor was it possible to explain his refusal to accept the first Russian resolution, if indeed the situation in East Pakistan had become so critical that surrender was inevitable. In this context we also referred to the message which was handed over by Maj-Gen Farman Ali to Mr Paul Marc Henry, representative of the United Nations at Dacca, for onward transmission to the secretary general of the United Nations, offering certain proposals for a political settlement in East Pakistan. Finally, we expressed the opinion that if Gen. Yahya Khan as Commander-in-Chief of the Army had shown a greater determination and courage and directed the Eastern Command to hold on somewhat longer than Dec 16, 1971, it was quite possible that a satisfactory solution ordering a ceasefire might have been obtained from the Security Council.

During the present phase of our inquiry nothing has been said by the witnesses about the state of our international relations and their impact on the 1971 war, nor about the moves at the United Nations except that Maj-Gen. Farman Ali has clarified the position with regard to the message attributed to him. He has stated that the message was drafted under the instructions of the Governor of East Pakistan who had been authorised by the President of Pakistan to offer proposals for a political settlement with the Awami League, and that he handed over a copy of the same to Mr Paul Marc Henry as directed by the Governor of East Pakistan. While this clarification removes the mystery surrounding the so-called 'Farman Ali incident' it does not in any manner affect the conclusions already stated by us in the main report as regards the international aspect.

### **The military aspect**

While discussing the military aspect of the war in the main report we came to the conclusion that the major role in the 1971 disaster had been that of the ground

forces, that the strategic concept embodied in War Directive No.4 of 1967, required a drastic revision in the light of the political and military situation developing as a result of the military action in East Pakistan in March 1971, but the Army High Command did not carry out any in depth study of the effect of these new factors, nor did it pay any attention to the growing disparity between the war preparedness and the capability of the armed forces of Pakistan and India as a result of the Indo-Soviet Treaty of August 1971. We dealt at length with the concepts of defence as well as the plans formulated by the General Headquarters both for East and West Pakistan, and pointed out the defect and deficiencies in those plans, apart from the inadequacy of resources available on both fronts as compared to those of the enemy. However, we observed that our study of the military aspect of the war in East Pakistan, both limited and total, was inconclusive on account of the non-availability of the evidence of the Commander, Eastern Command, and other senior officers then serving in East Pakistan.

Having now had the advantage of examining these Commanders at considerable length we feel we are in a position to formulate our final conclusions as to the causes of surrender in East Pakistan.

There has been some controversy as to the exact status of Lt-Gen A A K Niazi namely, whether he was a Theatre Commander or merely a Corps Commander, although he has been officially described throughout as Commander, Eastern Command. While a Corps Commander is merely a Commander of a number of divisions placed under his command, a Theatre Commander is not merely in command of his troops, but is also in overall command of all the forces in the area, including the naval and air forces. In the case of East Pakistan the Flag Officer Commanding of the Navy and the Air Officer Commanding of the Pakistan Air Force were directly under their own respective Commanders-in-Chief, although they were instructed to liaise and coordinate with the Commander Eastern Command.

Technically speaking, therefore, Gen. Niazi was not a Theatre Commander and was never designated as such. Nevertheless, situated as he was, we consider that at least from Dec 3, 1971, onwards, on which date war broke out on the Western front as well, Lt-Gen Niazi became, for all intents and purposes, an independent Corps Commander, possessing of necessity and by force of circumstances all the powers of a Theatre Commander, and even the General Headquarters expected him to act as such, for there was no possibility thereafter of replacing him by another Commander of equivalent rank. Gen. Niazi's

conduct of war, as also his final decision to surrender, has, therefore, to be judged in this light.

The traditional concept of defence adopted by the Pakistan Army was that the defence of East Pakistan lies in West Pakistan. However, Lt-Gen Niazi contended before the Commission that the Indians would not have started an all-out war in East Pakistan if the western front had not been opened by Pakistan. It seems to us that this contention is based on a lack of proper appreciation of the enemy threat which was fast developing in the Eastern Theatre. It had become quite evident that the Mukti Bahini on their own, even after their training in India would never be able to face a pitched battle with the Pakistan Army, and the Indians could not afford to prolong the war by proxy for an indefinite period. The plan of capturing a sizeable "chunk" of territory for setting up Bangladesh had also been frustrated by the forward deployment of our troops. An all-out war had, therefore, become inevitable for India, and in such an event the only course open for Pakistan was to implement the traditional concept of defending East Pakistan from West Pakistan in a determined and effective manner. The concept, therefore, that the defence of East Pakistan lies in West Pakistan remained valid and if ever there was need to invoke this concept it was on the 21st of November, 1971, when the Indian troops had crossed the East Pakistan borders in naked aggression. Unfortunately, the delay in opening the Western front and the half-hearted and hesitant manner in which it was ultimately opened only helped in precipitating the catastrophe in East Pakistan.

The Operational Instructions, issued by the Eastern Command as No 3 of 1971 on the 15th of July, 1971, contemplated a forward defensive posture with strong points and fortresses which were to be made logically self-sufficient to fight a battle lasting for at least 30 days, even if by-passed. They were also expected to act as firm bases or jumping off points for actions against the enemy from the flanks or from behind. Dacca was to be defended at all costs by being made into a fortress, as it was the lynch-pin, both politically and militarily.

The plan envisaged as many as 25 fortresses and nine strong points, consisting mainly of blunt up areas such as district of sub-divisional headquarter, towns, large villages and cantonments. The paucity of troops did not permit them to be manned but it was expected that the troops deployed along the border and in counter-insurgency operations would gradually fall back and take up defensive positions within the fortresses and strong points. His concept further contemplated that the fortresses would be defended to the last man and last round.

The fortress concept postulates three essential conditions for its success, namely: (a) that there must be adequate reserves to strike the enemy and to give mutual support to another fortress; (b) that the fortresses must be so located as to be able to mutually support each other; and (c) that the population in the areas in which such fortresses are located is not hostile. Gen. Niazi was fully aware that none of these conditions were fulfilled in East Pakistan, as he did not have enough troops to man 34 fortresses and strong points with his then 29 battalions; his fortresses and strong points were so located that they were not in a position to mutually support each other, and he also knew that the local population was hostile and the movement of his troops would be made impossible by the Mukti Bahini. We are at a loss to understand how he expected the concept to succeed in these circumstances.

The evidence clearly discloses that none of the fortresses were manned, nor did they have protective defences capable of withstanding enemy attacks supported by armoured forces. Troops were expected to man these fortresses after falling back from their forward positions; even such artillery or heavy weapons as the troops possessed were to be carried back to the fortresses. The withdrawal of the troops to the fortresses was, as was to be expected in those circumstances, by no means an orderly withdrawal, but in most cases it was a disorderly retreat, leaving even the heavy equipment behind. There were no reserves with any local Commanders, except for 16 Division, and the command reserve of only a brigade strength had also been committed in the Eastern sector, through which the main enemy thrust came. The soundness of the fortress concept thus stood thoroughly exposed by the end result which it produced.

In our view, the concept was utterly inappropriate for achieving the mission assigned to the Commander, Eastern Command, of defending East Pakistan and maintaining his presence in East Pakistan in the changed situation created by the war launched by the enemy. The wisest course of action for Gen. Niazi would have been to concentrate his troops in a smaller area, protected by the major natural obstacles around the military and political lynch-pin—Dacca.

At any rate, there should have been a contingency plan for a planned withdrawal into the Dacca Triangle to cater for fighting an all-out war with an enemy vastly superior in resources and capabilities both on the ground and in the air. The failure on the part of the Eastern Command to so plan amounts to gross negligence. The fortress strategy might have been suitable for carrying out the counter-insurgency operations, but after the 21st of November, 1971, it became redundant. The net result of this strategy was to give the opposite advantage to

the enemy, who at his leisure routed and dispersed our troops while himself advancing towards Dacca.

The tragedy with Gen. Niazi has been his obsession that he will not be called upon to fight any major battle with the Indians in East Pakistan, in spite of the enormous Indian build up around East Pakistan, the detailed briefing given by GHQ to his Chief of Staff about the Indian plans, and the advice given to him by the Chief of the General Staff and the Vice-Chief of the General Staff, during their last visit to the Eastern Theatre, for the redeployment of his troops. Gen. Niazi's only reaction to these warnings about the new threat was to hastily raise two ad hoc divisions namely 36 division in September 1971 and 39 division on the 19th of November, 1971, by committing his command reserves.

Lt-Gen Niazi tried to justify the deployment of his reserves by saying that he had been promised eight more battalions, and if these had been sent, he would have had enough troops to create a command reserve as also to meet the deficiencies of the new ad hoc formations. The evidence unfortunately does not disclose that any firm commitment was made by the GHQ. We also find that even if the extra battalions had been sent, the position would not have materially improved as there was no clear plan for their deployment. Gen. Niazi was, therefore, not justified in denuding himself of his reserves before the actual arrival of the additional troops.

We are also not impressed by the excuse put forward by the Commander, Eastern Command, for not modifying his plans, namely, that the mission originally assigned to him to hold every inch of territory in East Pakistan and to prevent the establishment of Bangladesh by the capture of any sizeable chunk of territory, was never changed by the High Command. As an independent Corps Commander, thousands of miles away from the GHQ, it should have been apparent to him that at least from the 21st of November, 1971, onwards the more important part of his mission was to defend East Pakistan and to keep the Corps in being, by giving up territory if necessary.

We also find that it is not correct to say that the mission given to the Eastern Command was never changed, because the GHQ had given him through more than one message a clear indication that territory had become less important, and that the command should fight for time keeping in view only territories of strategic importance.

The detailed narrative of events, as given by us in the supplementary report, clearly shows that the planning was hopelessly defective and there was no plan at all for the defence of Dacca, nor for any concerted effort to stem the enemy

onslaught with a division or a brigade battle at any stage. It was only when the General found himself gradually being encircled by the enemy which had successfully managed to by-pass his fortresses and reached Faridpur, Khulna, Daudkandi and Chandpur (the shortest route to Dacca) that he began to make frantic efforts to get the troops back for the defence of Dacca. It was unfortunately then too late, the ferries necessary for crossing the troops over the big Jamna river from the area of 16 Division had disappeared and the Mukti Bahini had invested the area behind, making vehicular movement impossible. Orderly withdrawal of troops in time for concentrated defence was also made impossible by the unfortunate orders issued by Lt-Gen Niazi that no withdrawal was to take place unless cleared two-up and without suffering 75 per cent casualties.

In the absence of contingency plans for the withdrawal of troops into the Dacca Triangle area behind the big rivers, to prevent the enemy breakthrough and to deal if need be with the known capability of the enemy to heli-drop troops behind our lines after it had acquired mastery of the air by either eliminating or neutralising our Air Force of only one squadron, it was not at all a matter of surprise that the defences should have collapsed immediately the thin lines in the forward positions were pierced by the enemy. On the fourth day of the all out war major fortresses were abandoned without a fight, namely, Jessore and Jhenida on the west and Brahmanbaria on the East. On the next day the Comilla fortress was isolated by encirclement from all sides, and on the 9th of December, 1971 even a Divisional Commander abandoned his area of responsibility with his headquarters, leaving his formation behind. On the same day again two more fortresses, namely, Kushtia and Laksham were abandoned. At the latter fortress even the sick and wounded were shamefully left behind. By the 10th of December, 1971, even Hilli, where a determined battle had been fought for 16 days, had to be abandoned. The Brigade returning from Mymensingh got entangled with heli-dropped Indian troops, and the Brigade Commander and some of his troops were taken prisoners. The rest scattered and reached Dacca in pieces.

## **The surrender**

The painful story of the last few days immediately preceding the surrender on the 16th of December, 1971, has been narrated at some length in part IV of this supplementary report. We have come to the conclusion that there was no order to

surrender, but that in view of the desperate picture painted by the Commander, Eastern Command, the higher authorities only gave him permission to surrender if he, in his judgement, thought it necessary. Gen. Niazi could have, in our view, disobeyed such an order, even assuming it was an order, if he thought that he had the capability of defending Dacca. On his own estimate, he had 26,400 men at Dacca in uniform and he could have held out for at least another two weeks, because the enemy would have taken a week to build up its forces in the Dacca area and another week to reduce the fortress of Dacca. If Gen. Niazi had done so and lost his life in the process, he would have made history and would have been remembered by coming generations as a great hero and a great martyr, but the events show that he had already lost the will to fight after the 7th of December, 1971, when his major fortresses at Jessore and Brahmanbari had fallen. The question of creating history, therefore, was never in his mind.

Even more painful than the military failures of Lt-Gen Niazi is the story of the abject manner in which he agreed to sign the surrender document laying down arms to the so-called joint command of Indian and Mukti Bahini, to be present at the airport to receive the victorious Indian Gen. Aurora, to order his own ADC to present a guard of honour to the Indian General and then to participate in the public surrender ceremony at the Race Course, to the everlasting shame of Pakistan and its Armed Forces. Even if he had been obliged to surrender, by force of circumstances, it was not necessary for him to behave in this shameful manner at every step of the process of surrender. The detailed accounts which have been given before the Commission by those who had the misfortune of witnessing these events, leave no doubt that Lt-Gen Niazi had suffered a complete moral collapse during the closing phases of war.

While undoubtedly the responsibility for these failures lies with the Commander, Eastern Command, the GHQ cannot escape its responsibility, as the plan had been approved by it. It was also the responsibility of the GHQ to correct the mistakes of the Eastern Command, as communications were open to the last. It was incumbent upon the GHQ to guide, direct and influence the conduct of the war in the Eastern Theatre, if the Commander himself in that Theatre was incapable of doing so. But the GHQ failed in this important duty. The Commander-in-Chief remained indifferent.

While we have not specifically condemned the performance of senior officers other than Lt-Gen A A K Niazi, Maj-Gen Muhammad Jamshed, Maj-Gen M Rahim Khan and some of the Brigadiers, we cannot help remarking that all the senior officers stationed in East Pakistan immediately before and during

the war of 1971 must be held collectively responsible for the failings and weaknesses which led to the defeat of the Pakistan Army. The only thing which goes in their favour is that while assessing their individual responsibility the Commission was obliged to take note of the limitations imposed upon them by the concepts and attitudes adopted by the Eastern Command, the admitted shortages and deficiencies in men and materials faced by them as compared to the vast resources of the enemy, and the general demoralization which stemmed from the culpable acts of commission and omission on the part of the Army High Command at Rawalpindi and the Commander, Eastern Command at Dacca. Finally, there was also the unfortunate overriding factor of a long and inherited tradition of unquestioned obedience and loyalty to the superior commander which prevented most of these officers from questioning the soundness of the critical decisions and actions taken by the High command including the final act of surrender.

Before we conclude this part of the discussion, we would like to place on record that, apart from a few individuals, the large body of officers and men operating in East Pakistan accepted the final decision without any thought of disobedience only owing to their ingrained sense of discipline, and the majority of them would have been undoubtedly willing to fight to the last and lay down their lives for the glory of Pakistan. The gallantry and determination with which some of the battles were fought in East Pakistan has been acknowledged even by the enemy.

### **The moral aspect**

Apart from the political, international and military factors, an important cause for the defeat of the Pakistan Army in the 1971 war was the lack of moral character and courage in the senior army commanders.

From the evidence brought before the Commission it has clearly emerged that the process of moral degenerations among the senior ranks of the armed forces was set in motion by their involvement in Martial Law duties in 1958, that these tendencies reappeared and were, in fact, intensified when Martial Law was imposed in the country once again in March 1969 by Gen. Yahya Khan, and that there is indeed substance in the allegations that a large number of senior army officers had not only indulged in large scale acquisition of lands and houses and other commercial activities but had also adopted highly immoral and licentious ways of life, which seriously affected their professional capabilities

and their qualities of leadership. It appears that they had lost the will to fight and no longer possessed the ability to take vital and critical decisions demanded of them for the successful prosecution of the war. These remarks particularly apply to Gen. Yahya Khan, his close associates, Gen. Abdul Hamid Khan, the late Maj-Gen Khuda Dad Khan and Lt-Gen A A K Niazi, apart from certain other officers. It is necessary that these serious allegations be properly dealt with as recommended by us in the next chapter.

### **Alleged atrocities**

Our examination of the available evidence shows that there is substance in the allegation that during and after the military action excesses were indeed committed on the people of East Pakistan, although the versions and estimates put forward by the Dacca authorities are highly coloured and exaggerated. We have also found that strong provocation was offered to the army owing to the misdeeds of the Awami League militants. It is also clear that use of force was undoubtedly inherent in the military action required to restate the authority of the federal government. Unfortunately, in spite of all these factors, we are of the view that the officers charged with the task of restoring law and order were under an obligation to act with restraint and to employ only the minimum force necessary for the purpose. The Pakistan Army was called upon to operate in Pakistan territory and could not, therefore, be permitted to behave as if it was dealing with external aggression in operating on enemy soil. Irrespective, therefore, of the magnitude of the atrocities, we are of the considered opinion that it is necessary for the government of Pakistan to take effective action to punish those who were responsible for the commission of these alleged excesses and atrocities. For this purpose a high-powered court or commission of inquiry should be set up, and its personnel should be publicly announced so as to satisfy national conscience and international opinion.

Professional responsibility of certain senior army commanders From the conclusions outlined by us in the preceding paragraphs, particularly as regards the military aspect of the debacle it must have become clear that in our view several senior army commanders have been guilty of serious dereliction of duty in formulating and executing the defence plans, and some are even guilty of shamefully abandoning the fortresses which it was their duty to defend. We have also found that the Commander, Eastern Command, and his Chief of Staff, Brig Baqar Siddiqui displayed wilful neglect in the matter of the execution of denial

plans, with the result that large quantities of valuable war material, equipment, installations, arms and ammunition were delivered intact to the Indians at the time of surrender.

All these acts of omission and commission call for deterrent action by way of court martial wherever permissible under the law. Detailed recommendations in respect of all these matters are contained in the next chapter.

It has come to the notice of the Commission that during his period of captivity, and even after repatriation to Pakistan, Gen. A A K Niazi assisted by his Chief of Staff, Brig Baqar Siddiqui, has been making efforts to influence his divisional and Brigade commanders, by threats and inducements, so as to persuade them to present a coordinate story of the events in East Pakistan with a view to mitigating his own responsibility for the debacle. This is a serious matter and calls for notice.

The surrender in East Pakistan has indeed been a tragic blow to the nation. By the act of surrender, Pakistan stood dismembered and the image of the Pakistan Army as an efficient and excellent fighting force stood shattered. We can only hope that the nation has learnt the necessary lessons from these tragic events and the effective and early action will be taken in the light of the conclusions reached in this report.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

1. In the concluding portion of our main report, submitted in 1972, we had made a number of recommendations based on our study of the various aspects of the causes of the debacle of 1971. Some of these recommendations need to be modified, or amplified, in the light of the fresh evidence which we have now recorded; while the need for the others has only been further emphasized. We believe that the object of setting up this Commission would be fully realized only if appropriate and early action is taken by the government on these recommendations.

Even though it involves a repetition of what we have already said in the main report, we consider that it would be appropriate if all our recommendations are now finally set out at one place, for facility of reference and action. Detailed reasons and justification for these recommendations will be found in the relevant chapters of the main report as well as this supplementary report. We are aware that some of these recommendations have already been implemented, but this would not appear to be a reason for not including them in this final summing up.

## I. Trials

There is consensus on the imperative need of bringing to book those senior Army Commanders who have brought disgrace and defeat to Pakistan by their subversion of the Constitution, usurpation of political negligence and wilful neglect in the performance of their duties and physical and normal cowardice in abandoning the fight when they had the capability and resources to resist the enemy. Firm and proper action would not only satisfy the nation's demand for punishment where it is deserved, but would also ensure against any future recurrence of the kind of shameful conduct displayed during the 1971 war. We accordingly recommend that the following trials be undertaken without delay:-

- That Gen. Yahya Khan, Gen. Abdul Hamid Khan, Lt-Gen SGMM Pirzada, Lt-Gen Gul Hassan, Maj-Gen Umar and Maj-Gen Mitha should be publicly tried for being party to a criminal conspiracy to illegally usurp power from FM Mohammad Ayub Khan on the 25th of March, 1969, and to maintain Gen. Yahya Khan in power if necessary by the use of force. In furtherance of their common purpose they did actually try to influence political parties by threats, inducements and even bribes to support their designs both for bringing about a particular kind of result during the elections of 1970, and later persuading some of the political parties and the elected members of the National Assembly to refuse to attend the session of the National Assembly scheduled to be held at Dacca on the 3rd of March, 1971. They, furthermore, in agreement with each other brought about a situation in East Pakistan which led to a civil disobedience movement, armed revolt by the Awami League and subsequently to the surrender of our troops in East Pakistan and the dismemberment of Pakistan.
- That the Officers mentioned in No. (i) above should also be tried for criminal neglect of duty in the conduct of war both in East Pakistan and West Pakistan. The details of this neglect would be found in the Chapters dealing with the military aspect of the war.
- That Lt. Gen. Irshad Ahmad Khan, former Commander 1 Corps, be tried for criminal and wilful neglect of duty in conducting the operations of his Corps in such a manner that nearly 500 villages of the Shakargarh tehsil of Sialkot district in West Pakistan were surrendered to the enemy without a fight and as a consequence the Army offensive in the south was seriously jeopardised.

- That Maj. Gen. Abid Zahid, former GOC 15 Div, be tried for wilful neglect of duty and shameful surrender of a large area comprising nearly 98 villages in the Phuklian salient in the Sialkot district of West Pakistan, which surrender also posed a standing threat to the safety of Marala Headworks by bringing the Indian forces within nearly 1500 yards thereof. He also kept the GHQ in the dark about Indian occupation of the Phuklian salient until the loss was discovered after the war.
- That Maj. Gen B.M. Mustafa, former GOC 18 Division, be tried for wilful neglect of duty in that his offensive plan aimed at the capture of the Indian position of Ramgarh in the Rajasthan area (Western Front) was militarily unsound and haphazardly planned, and its execution resulted in severe loss of vehicles and equipment in the desert.
- That Lt. Gen. A.A.K. Niazi, former Commander, Eastern Command, be court-martialled on 15 charges as set out in Chapter III of part V of the Supplementary Report regarding his wilful neglect in the performance of his professional and military duties connected with the defence of East Pakistan and the shameful surrender of his forces to the Indians at a juncture when he still had the capability and resources to offer resistance.
- That Maj. Gen. Mohammad Jamshed, former GOC 36 (ad-hoc) Division, Dacca, be tried by court martial on five charges listed against him, in the aforementioned part of the Supplementary Report, for willful neglect of his duty in the preparation of plans for the defence of Dacca and showing complete lack of courage and will to fight, in acquiescing in the decision of the Commander, Eastern Command, to surrender to the Indian forces when it was still possible to put up resistance for a period of two weeks or so, and also for willfully neglecting to inform the authorities concerned, on repatriation to Pakistan, about the fact of distribution of Rs. 50,000 by him out of Pakistan currency notes and other funds at his disposal or under his control in East Pakistan.
- That Maj. Gen. M. Rahim Khan, former GOC 39 (ad-hoc) Division, Chandpur, in East Pakistan, be tried by court martial on five charges listed against him in this Report for showing undue regard for his personal safety in abandoning his Division, his Divisional troops and area of responsibility and vacating his Divisional Headquarters from

Chandpur on the 8th of December, 1971; for his wilful insistence on moving by day owing to fear of Mukti Bahini and thus causing the death of fourteen Naval ratings and four Officers of his own HQ, besides injuries to himself and several others, due to strafing by Indian aircraft; for his abandoning valuable signal equipment at Chandpur; for spreading despondency and alarm by certain conversation on the 12th of December, 1971, at Dacca; and for willfully avoiding submitting a debriefing report to GHQ on being specially evacuated to West Pakistan in early 1971 so as to conceal the circumstances of his desertion from him Divisional Headquarters at Chandpur.

- That Brig. G.M. Baquir Siddiqui, former GOS, Eastern Command, Dacca, be tried by court martial on nine charges as formulated in this Report, for his wilful neglect of duty in advising the Commander, Eastern Command, as regards the concept and formulation of defence plans, appreciation of the Indian threat, execution of denial plans, abrupt changes in command, friendliness with the Indian during captivity and attempts to influence formation Commanders by threats and inducements to present a coordinated story before the GHQ and the Commission of Inquiry in regard to the events leading to surrender in East Pakistan.
- That Brig Mohammad Hayat, former Commander 107 Brigade, 9 Division, East Pakistan, be tried by court martial on four charges for displaying wilful neglect in not formulating a sound plan for the defence of the fortress of Jessore; for failing to properly plan and command the brigade counter-attack at Gharibpur (Gauripur?), for shamefully abandoning the fortress of Jessore and delivering intact to the enemy all supplies and ammunition dumps; and disobeying the orders of the GOC 9 Division, to withdraw to Magura in the event of a forced withdrawal from Jessore;
- That Brig Mohammad Aslam Niazi, former commander 53 Brigade, 39 (ad-hoc) Division, East Pakistan, be tried by court martial on six charges for displaying culpable lack of initiative, determination and planning ability in that he failed to occupy and prepare defences at Mudafarganj as ordered by his GOC on the 4th of December, 1971; for failing to eject the enemy from Mudafarganj as ordered on the 6th of December, 1971; for shamefully abandoning the fortress of Laksham on or about the 9th of December, 1971; for wilful neglect in failing to

properly organise exfiltration of his troops from the fortress of Laksham to Comilla on the 9th of December, 1971, thus resulting in heavy casualties and capture of several elements of his troops on the way; for showing callous disregard of military ethics in abandoning at Laksham 124 sick and wounded with two Medical Officers without informing them about the proposed vacation of the fortress; and for abandoning intact at Laksham all heavy weapons, stocks of ammunition and supplies for the use of the enemy.

## **II. Inquiry and Trials for Alleged Atrocities**

That as recommended in Paragraph 7 of Chapter III of Part V of the Main Report and in Paragraph 39 of Chapter II of Part V of this Supplementary Report, a high-powered Court or Commission of Inquiry be set up to investigate into persistent allegations of atrocities said to have been committed by the Pakistan Army in East Pakistan during its operations from March to December, 1971, and to hold trials of those who indulged in these atrocities, brought a bad name to the Pakistan Army and alienated the sympathies of the local population by their acts of wanton cruelty and immorality against our own people. The composition of the Court of Inquiry, if not its proceedings, should be publicly announced so as to satisfy national conscience and international opinion. The Commission feels that sufficient evidence is now available in Pakistan for a fruitful inquiry to be undertaken in this regard. As the Government of Bangladesh has since been recognised by Pakistan, it may also be feasible to request the Dacca authorities to forward to this Court of Inquiry whatever evidence may be available with them.

## **III. Other Inquiries**

That allegations of personal immorality, drunkenness and indulgence in corrupt practices against General Yahya Khan, General Abdul Hamid Khan and Maj. Gen Khuda Dad Khan be properly investigated as there is prima facie evidence to show that their moral degeneration resulted in indecision, cowardice and professional incompetence. In the light of the result of this inquiry suitable charges may be added against these Officers, during the trials we have already recommended earlier. The details of the allegations and the evidence relating thereto will be found in Chapter I of Part V of the Main Report. That similar

allegations of personal immorality; acquiring a notorious reputation in this behalf at Sialkot, Lahore and Dacca, and indulgence in the smuggling of Pan from East to West Pakistan made against Lt-Gen Niazi should also be inquired into and, if necessary, made the subject matter of additional charges at the trial earlier recommended in respect of the performance of his professional duties in East Pakistan. The details of these allegations and the evidence relating thereto will be found in Chapter 1 of Part V of the main report and in Chapter 1 of Part V of this supplementary report.

That an inquiry is also indicated into the disposal of Rs.50,000 said to have been distributed by Maj-Gen Mohammad Jamshed, former GOC, 39 (ad hoc) Division and Director General, East Pakistan Civil Armed Forces immediately before the surrender on the 16th of December, 1971. Details of this matter including the General's explanation would be found in paras 21 to 23 of Chapter 1 of Part V of the supplementary report. We have already recommended that this officer be tried by a court martial on several charges including his wilful failure to disclose any fact at all about this sum of Rs.50,000. That charges do not necessarily imply any dishonest practice on his part. The inquiry now suggested can form a part of the charges already recommended.

That allegations of indulging in large-scale looting of property in East Pakistan including theft of Rs. 13,500,000 from the National Bank Treasury at Siraj Ganj persistently made against Brig Jehanzeb Arbab, former Commander, 57 Brigade, Lt-Col (now Brig), Muzaffar Ali Zahid, former CO, 31 Field Regiment, Lt-Col Basharat Ahmad, former CO, 18 Punjab, Lt-Col Mohammad Taj, former CO, 32 Punjab, Lt-Col Mohammad Tufail, former CO, 55 Field Regiment, and Major Maddad Hussain Shah of 18 Punjab, as set out in paras 24 and 25 of Chapter of Part V of the supplementary report, should be thoroughly inquired into and suitable action taken in the light of the proved facts.

That an inquiry be held into the allegation, noticed by us in para 36 of Chapter 1 of Part V of the main report, that while serving in the Martial Law administration at Multan, Maj-Gen Jehanzeb, presumably a Brigadier at that time, demanded a bribe of Rs one lakh from a PCS officer posted at Chairman of the Municipal Committee of Multan, on pain of proceeding against him for corruption under Martial Law, as a consequence of which demand the said PCS officer is said to have committed suicide leaving behind a letter saying that although he had made only Rs. 15,000, he was being required to pay Rs one lakh to the Martial Law officers. The allegation was made before the Commission by Brig Mohammad Abbas Beg (witness No 9).

That an inquiry is also necessary into the allegation made against Brig Hayatullah that he entertained some women in his bunker in the Maqbulpur sector (West Pakistan) on the night of 11th or 12th of December, 1971, when Indians shells were falling on his troops. The allegation was contained in any anonymous letter addressed to the Commission and supported in evidence before us by Brigadier Hayatullah's Brigade Major, namely, Major Munawar Khan (witness No 42).

That it is necessary to investigate into the allegations, as set out in paragraph 9 to 14 of Chapter 1 of Part V of the main report, to the effect that senior Army Commanders grossly abused their official position and powers under the Martial Law to acquire large allotments of land, and obtained substantial house building loans on extremely generous terms from certain banking institutions with which they deposited large amount from departmental funds entrusted to their care. Those found guilty of corrupt practices should receive the punishment they deserve under the military law or the ordinary criminal law of the land as the case may be.

That a thorough investigation be conducted into the suspicion created in the mind of the Commission, during the recording of additional evidence of officers repatriated from India, that there may be some complicity or collusion between the Commander, Eastern Command, Lt-Gen A A K Niazi, and his Chief of Staff Brig G M Baqar Siddiqui on the one hand and the Indian authorities on the other in the matter of the failure of the Pakistan Armed Forces to carry out execution of denial plans immediately before the surrender in spite of instruction issued in this behalf by the GHQ on the 10th of December, 1971. We have already included relevant charges in this behalf against these two officers, but we consider that it would be in the public interest to depute a specialized agency to probe into the matter further. On the material available to us we cannot put the matter higher than suspicion, but we have not been able to find any reasonable, or even plausible explanation for the orders issued by the Eastern Command to stop the execution of denial plan particularly in Dacca and Chittagong, thus ensuring the delivery intact to the Indians of large amounts of war materials and other equipment. Details of these deliveries will be found in Chapter VII of Part IV dealing with the aftermath of surrender,

That an inquiry be held into the circumstances under which Commander Gui Zareen of the Pakistan Navy was carried from Khulna to Singapore on the 7th of December, 1971, by a French ship called MV Fortescue, thus abandoning his duties at PNS Titumir Naval Base, Khulna. The case of this officer was dealt

with by us in paras 12 and 13 of Chapter III of Part V of the main report.

#### **IV. Cases requiring departmental action**

While examining the course of events and the conduct of war in East Pakistan, we formed a poor opinion about the performance and capabilities of Brig S A Ansari, ex-Commander 23 Brigade, Brig Manzoor Ahmad, ex-Commander 57 Brigade, 9 Div and Brig Abdul Qadir Khan, ex-Commander 94 Brigade, 36 (ad hoc) Division. We consider that their further retention in service is not in the public interest and they may accordingly be retired.

#### **V. Performance and conduct of junior officers**

In the very nature of things the Commission was not in a position to examine at any length the conduct and performance of officers below the brigade level, although some cases necessarily came to our notice where the performance of these officers had a direct bearing on the fate of important battles or where their conduct transgressed the norms of discipline. Such cases have been mentioned by us at their proper place, but by and large cases of Junior Officers must be dealt with by the respective service headquarters who have obtained detailed debriefing reports from all of them and are also in possession of the assessment of their performance by their immediate superiors.

#### **VI. Measures for moral reform in the armed forces**

While dealing at some length with the moral aspect of the 1971 debacle, in Chapter I of Part V of the main report as well as in the corresponding chapter of the present supplementary report, we have expressed the opinion that there is indeed substance in the widespread allegation, rather belief, that due to corruption arising out of the performance of Martial law duties, lust for wine and women, and greed for lands and houses, a large number of senior army officers, particularly those occupying the highest positions, had not only lost the will to fight but also the professional competence necessary for taking the vital and critical decisions demanded of them for the successful prosecution of the war. Accordingly, we recommend that:

- The government should call upon all officers of the armed forces to submit

declarations of their assets, both moveable, and immovable, and those acquired in the names of their relations and dependants during the last 10 years (they were exempted from submitting such declarations during the last two periods of martial Law). If on examination of such declarations any Officer is found to have acquired assets beyond this known means, then appropriate action should be taken against him.

- The Armed Services should devise ways and means to ensure:
  - That moral values are not allowed to be compromised by infamous behaviour particularly at higher levels;
  - That moral rectitude is given due weight along with professional qualities in the matter of promotion to higher ranks;
  - That syllabi of academic studies at the military academics and other Service Institutions should include courses designed to inculcate in the young minds respect for religious democratic and political institutions;
  - That use of alcoholic drinks should be banned in military messes and functions;
  - That serious notice should be taken of notorious sexual behaviour and other corrupt practices.

## **VII. Discipline and Terms and Conditions of Service**

These matters were discussed by us in Chapter III of Part V of the Main Report, and for the reasons given therein we make the following recommendations:

- An inter-services study should be undertaken of the operative terms and conditions of service and amenities available to Officers, JCOs and other ranks of the Services so as to remove disparities existing in this behalf and causing discontentment among the junior officers and other ranks of various Services.
- The GHQ should consider the advisability of adopting recommendations contained in the report submitted by the Discipline Committee headed by the late Maj. Gen. Iftikhar Khan Janjua.
- The Navy and Air Force might also appoint their own Discipline Committees to consider the peculiar problems of their Services, such measure to be in addition to the inter-services study recommended above.

## **VIII. Improvement and Modernization of the Pakistan Navy**

From the detailed discussion of the role of the Navy, as contained in Section (D) of Chapter VIII of Part IV of the Main Report, and supplemented by further details of its operations in East Pakistan is set out in this Supplementary Report, it seems to us that the following steps are urgently called for to improve our naval capability:-

- That immediate attention should be given to the basic requirements for the modernization of the Pakistan Navy in order to make it capable of protecting the only sea port of Pakistan and of keeping the lifelines of the nation open. The Navy has been sadly neglected ever since the first Martial Law regime, for in the concept of Army Commander the Navy was not expected to play much of a role. The folly of this theory was fully demonstrated during this war. The Pakistan Navy, we strongly recommend, should have its own air arm of suitable aircraft for the purpose of reconnaissance and for defence against missile boats. This is the only way in which the threat posed by the growing Indian Navy and her missile boats can be countered.
- There is urgent need for developing a separate harbour for the Navy away from Karachi, from where the Navy can protect the approaches to Karachi more effectively.
- In view of the serious handicaps which were posed by the late conveyance of the D-day and the H-hour to the Pakistan Navy and its total exclusion from the planning for war, the need for making the Navy a fully operative member in the joint Chiefs of Staff Organization is imperative.

## **IX. Improvement in the Role of P.A.F.**

In Section (C) of Chapter VIII of Part IV of the Main Report as well as in a separate Chapter of the present supplement (viz Chapter X of Part III), we have discussed at length the role and performance of the P.A.F. in the 1971 war. In the light of that discussion, we recommend as follows:

- We are not convinced that a more forward-looking posture cannot be adopted by the Air Force having regard to the peculiar needs of the country. We recommend, therefore, that Pakistan should have more forward air fields located at such places from where it might be in a position to give more protection to our vital line of communication as well as to major centres of industry. The adoption of such a forward strategy would also increase the striking capabilities of our fighters.

- There is need also to improve the working of our early warning system. The time lag between the observation of an enemy aircraft by the first line of Mobile Observer Units and the final collation of that information in the Air Operation Centre takes unduly long because of the drafty system of reporting adopted. Training exercises to coordinate the working of the various agencies employed for the operation of the early warning system should be held periodically to keep them at a high pitch of efficiency.
- The Karachi Port should also be provided as soon as possible, with a low level seaward-looking radar which it seriously lacks and due to the want of which it suffered many handicaps during the last war.
- That with the increased Indian capability of blockading Karachi with missile boats the air defence of Karachi should be attached greater importance. Leaving the defence of Karachi to be tackled only by one squadron of fighters and a half squadron of bombers was extremely unwise.

## **X. Re-organization of Air Defence of Pakistan**

The subject of air defence has been discussed by us at some length in section (13) of Chapter VIII of Part IV of the Main Report. In the light of that discussion, we make the following recommendations:

- Since it will not be possible for us to enlarge our Air Force to any appreciable extent in the near future, we strongly recommend that we should strengthen our air defence programmes by at least doubling our holdings of anti-craft guns by the end of 1972 and ultimately raising it under a phased programme to 342 Batteries as suggested by the Air Force.
- Efforts should also be made to procure ground to air missiles for a more effective air defence of the country.
- If ground-to-air missiles are not available, then efforts should also be made to get radar controlled medium HAA guns from China.

## **XI. Recommendations with Regard to Civil Defence Measures**

This subject has also examined by us in Chapter VIII of Part IV of the Main Report, and we consider that the following measures are called for to improve the civil defence aspects in Pakistan:

- The civil defence arrangements should be placed under the Ministry of Defence, and not be made the responsibility of the Ministry of Interior or

other individual departments. The Central Government should accept the responsibility for the overall control and organization of the civil defence of the country, as Provincial Governments have not been able to shoulder this responsibility effectively in the past.

- Steps should be taken to improve the fire-fighting facilities in the country particularly in ports and industrial areas.
- Industrialists keeping inflammable materials near lines of communications and other vulnerable points should be induced, or in fact obliged under the law, to accept responsibility for the protection of their materials, and make effective arrangements for fire-fighting in their establishments.
- Provision should be made for storing large quantities of petrol and other fuels underground.

## **XII. Higher direction of war**

14. The deficiencies in the organization for the lighter direction of war were examined by us in Chapter XI of Part IV of the main report, and in the light of that discussion, we proposed the following measures:-

- The three Service Headquarters should be located at one place along with the Ministry of Defence.
- The posts of Commander-in-Chiefs should be replaced by Chiefs of Staff of the respective services. (This, we understand, has already been done by the government).
- The Defence Committee of the Cabinet should be reactivated and it should be ensured that 4ts meetings are held regularly. A positive direction should be added in its charter to give the Cabinet Division the right to initiate proceedings for the convening of its meetings at least once a quarter or on dates to be specified in the charter itself and meetings should be held even in the absence of the President or the Prime Minister under the chairmanship of the senior most minister present.
- There should also be a Defence Minister's Committee and the Ministry of Defence should assume its rightful position as a policy-making body and incorporating policy decisions into defence program after consultations with the three services. This should ensure the preparation of realistic plans for national defence within the agreed framework of budget allocations. It should meet under the chairmanship of the Defence Minister and comprise the Defence Secretary, the three Service Chiefs, the Financial Adviser for

Defence, the Director General of Civil Defence, the Director General Munitions Production, the Director General of Defence Procurement, the Director General of Inter-Services Intelligence Directorate, the Defence Scientific Adviser and any other General Secretary or service officer who may be required for a particular item on the agenda. If the defence portfolio is held by the President or the Prime Minister, then its meeting may be presided over by a Deputy Minister for Defence or by the Minister in-charge of Defence Production. In case no minister is available, the Defence Secretary should preside, irrespective of any considerations of protocol or precedence.

- The Secretaries Coordination committee, as at present constituted, should continue.
- It is imperative that the three Services should share equal and joint responsibility for national defence and that all plans and programmes for the development of the armed forces should be based on joint strategic objectives. It is necessary, therefore, that the three Service Chiefs should function as Joint Chiefs of Staff and not merely as individual Heads of their respective Service. This Joint Chiefs of Staff should constitute a corporate body with collective responsibility having its own planning staff for evolving joint plans and its own headquarters located at one place. The office of the Chairman of this Joint Chiefs of Staff must be held by rotation, irrespective of the personal ranks enjoyed by the three Service Chiefs. The duration of the tenure should be one year at a time and the chairmanship should commence with the senior Service, namely, the Army. A detailed charter of duties for this Joint Chiefs of Staff has been suggested in Annexure 'E' of Chapter XI of Part IV of the main report.
- Under the Joint Chiefs of Staff organization there will not only be a Secretariat but also a joint planning staff drawn from all the three Services. It might be designated as the "Joint Secretariat and Planning Staff". It will be responsible not only for providing the necessary secretariat assistance but also for evolving the joint defence plans, undertaking strategic studies and processing of all matters inter-services concern. The Joint Chiefs of Staff may also have other Joint Committees to assist on such matters as it may consider necessary.
- The Weaknesses in the preparedness of the armed forces, which have been brought to light, make us feel that there is need for an institution like the American "Inspectorate General" which should be a body charged with the

duty of carrying out surprise inspections and calling upon the formations and units concerned to demonstrate that they are fit for war. At present there is no machinery available for ascertaining the state of training, discipline and preparedness of the three Services. This Inspectorate-General should function under the Ministry of Defence with a small staff headed by a person not below the rank of a Major General. This will bring in the principle of accountability in the Armed Services also and there can be no objection if such a Joint Inspectorate General is set up for all the three Services.

- We have also felt the need for an Institute of Strategic Studies, preferably as a part of a university programme. The need for such an institute has been highlighted by the weakness in our joint strategic planning by the three Services. We are of the opinion that such an institute will go a long way in producing studies of value of examination by the other defence organization's.

### **XIII. National Security Council**

15. Having examined the working of the National Security Council in Chapter XI of Part IV of the main we are of the opinion that there is no need for superimposing such an organization on the Directorate of Intelligence Bureau and the Directorate of Inter-Services Intelligence. The National Security Council therefore, be abolished.

### **XIV. The Farman Ali incident**

In view of the fresh evidence examined by us regarding the role of Maj-Gen Farman Ali, which we have discussed in the concluding portion of Chapter III of Part V of the supplementary report, recommendation No.7 made in the main report has now become redundant, as we have found that in delivering a message to Mr Paul Marc Henry, Assistant Secretary General of the United Nations, Maj-Gen Farman Ali, acted under the instructions of the Governor of East Pakistan, who in turn had been authorised by the then President of Pakistan to make certain proposals for settlement in East Pakistan at that critical juncture.

# **Index**

Alexis, Johnson U.

Ayub, President Bangladesh Nationalist Party Bay of Bengal Bhutto, Zulfiqar Ali Blood, Archer Kent Bowles Chester Bush George H.W.

Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) Chou en Lai Ch'u Ch'en

Darul Uloom De Palma, Samuel Dring, Simon East Bengal East Pakistan Ershad, General Farland, Joseph S., Friendship Treaty Gandhi, Rajiv Gujral, I.K.

Haksar, P.N.

Haq, Inam-ul Henry, Paul Marc Hua, Huang

HUJI

Irwin II, John N.

Jamat-I-Islami JeM

Jha, Ambassador Kaul, T.N.

Keating, K.B.

Kellogg, Francis L.

Kennedy, Edward Khan, Rahimyar Khan, Sultan Kosygin, Alexei LeT

Malacca Straits Moorer, Admiral Muslim League NDA

Niazi, General North, East Frontier Agency Promises to Keep Quainton

Ram, Jagjivan Rasgotra, Maharajakrishna Rogers William P.

Sattar, President Scali, John Schneider

Singh, Sardar Swaran Spivack, Herbert D  
Stans, Maurice Thant U

*USS Enterprise*

Van Hollen

Wajed, Sheikh Hasina Wen'sheng, T'ang West Pakistan Westmorland, General  
William, Maurice J.

Yen-hua, Shih Zia, Begum Khalida Zia-ur-Rehman Zumwalt, Admiral Elmo R



JASWANT SINGH is among the most respected names in the country's public life, and in the world of diplomacy. He is currently the Leader of Opposition in the Rajya Sabha, the Upper House of India's Parliament. Amongst his several other pursuits are chess, golf, polo, and the promotion of *Dingal*, an ancient language of Rajasthan. This is his Tenth book. He promises more.



MAJOR GENERAL SURAJ BHATIA hails from Bannu (situated on the border of North Waziristan, Pakistan). Did his schooling in Rawalpindi and after partition moved to Independent India and was commissioned into the Indian Army in 1957. He participated in both 1965 and 1971 wars with Pakistan at the Sialkot and Chachhro Sectors respectively. Graduated from Defence Staff College, Wellington with post-graduation in Science from Madras University. He was awarded *Vishisht Seva Medal* (VSM) while serving in Arunachal Pradesh and the *Chief of Army Staff's Commendation Card* while fighting insurgency in Jammu & Kashmir.



*They paid the price...  
Across a world in flames  
But their own hate slew  
    their own soul  
Before (any) victory came'*

Kipling - *The Outlaws* - 1914

Rupra Co

[www.rupraco.com](http://www.rupraco.com)